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**EXCLUSIVE** Read what Kemi Badenoch AND Robert Jenrick have to say about their political split in your Express today

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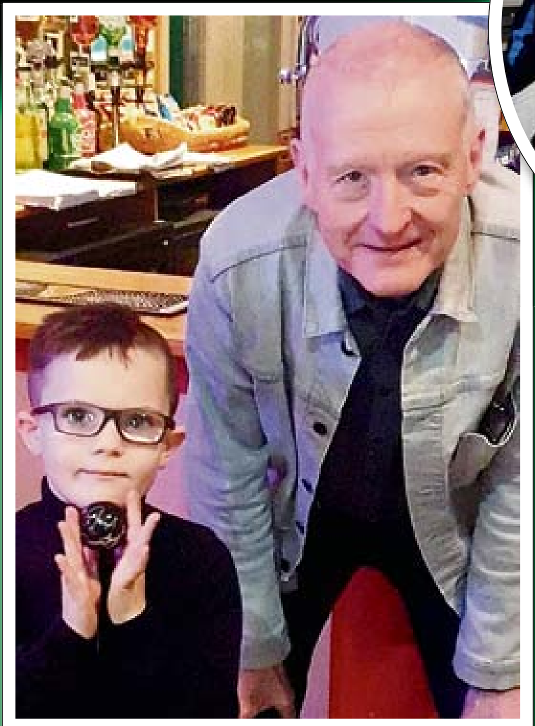
# Pocket rocket Tommy eyes glory



Tommy with Hendry, left, and Davis, below. With PE teacher Ryan Lamb, dad James and school head Claire Gilbert, inset

BY **ED CHATTERTON**
and **PAUL JENKINS**

A SNOOKER prodigy has got his big break after becoming the youngest player ever to reach the junior world championships – aged just nine.

Tommy "The Tornado" Fallon has been tipped to be the next Ronnie "The Rocket" O'Sullivan after taking the sport by storm, having first picked up a cue aged six.

He is jetting off to Bulgaria this weekend for the championships, where he will compete against players aged up to 19.

The pint-sized snooker ace said: "I'm quite scared for the world championships as I'm the youngest there, but I'm looking forward to it.

"It doesn't bother me once I get my waistcoat on. I just get on with my game.

"When people are watching me I'm more confident about my game.

"Ronnie is my favourite player and I'd love to be like him. I reckon I could probably beat him! I want to be a snooker player when I grow up. I want to be world champion."

Dad James Fallon, 48, revealed snooker helps calm Tommy's ADHD and autism. James, of Stourbridge, West Mids, said: "He's like Clark Kent and Superman – when he's in his suit with cue in hand, he's a different person. He has met a lot of famous players and took on Kyren Wilson, who he got in a snooker that was almost impossible to get out of."

Tommy has also met legends Ken Doherty, *right*, Steve Davis and Stephen Hendry.

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# Traitors and Tearfuls as Jade tells her story

BY **NICOLA METHVEN**

TEARS flowed freely in The Traitors castle last night thanks to an emotional banishment and an astonishing dinner party revelation.

Faithful Jade Scott told the remaining eight players gathered around the table that she had lost her mother and her half-sibling in very difficult circumstances eight years ago.

Jade wept as she explained: "My parents got divorced when I was seven, my Mum moved back to Hong Kong, she had a kid and then in 2018 they were both found dead."

The Phd student from the West Midlands blame her tears on the fact that it had been "an emotional day".

She told the group: "I have had to really rebuild myself from that point onwards.

"So I'm really proud of myself for being here and getting this far."

The others commended her bravery, with Stephen Libby telling her she had done "an incredible job".

In an interview after the dinner party, which was organised by host Claudia Winkleman, Jade said of losing her mum: "I was always very close with her so it was a shock to the system." Jade also wept at the Round Table earlier when the agony of being endlessly suspected took its toll.

She told Matt Hyndman, who believes she is a Traitor: "I've never seen someone go through so many roundtables and have to put up with as much as I have. I'm sick of it."

There were also tears from Faithful Ellie Buckley, who was banished after Traitor Rachel Duffy picked her, saying it was "suspicious" how close Ellie had been with her that day.

Murdered Jessie, far left and banished Ellie

Ellie said she was looking for friendship, telling her: "You don't know who to trust – that's why I wanted to hang out with you."

She did leave on a high by revealing she and Ross Garshong had come into the castle as a couple. Her banishment came after Jessie Stride became the Traitors' latest victim.

After Ellie's departure there were just eight players left to revel in Claudia's declaration that there would be no murder.

But their joy was short-lived when the presenter returned with a "ceremonial dagger" which allows its owner a double vote at the next round table.

Emotional Jade reveals her tragic past at the dinner

# COMMENT

## ROBERT JENRICK

**Reform MP for Newark**

**BRITAIN is broken. You can see it wherever you look.**

**Real wages haven't increased in years. The small boats, bringing dangerous people, keep coming. Some 93% of crime goes unsolved. Our roads are littered with potholes.**

**Recently, my dad, Bill, having suffered a stroke, waited 12 hours in A&E to be seen. Everyone I know has a story like that.**

**Public services, the economy, law and order: none of it is working as it should.**

**But the Conservative Party – a party I joined as a boy – won't admit Britain is broken. Why? Because they broke it.**

**Let me give you an example.**

**Over Christmas, I attacked Labour for bringing the anti-British, antisemitic, terrorist sympathiser, Alaa Abd El-Fattah, here from Egypt. I urged them to revoke his visa and deport this dangerous man from our shores. But senior figures in the Tory party were angry at me because, and I quote, it "exposed the party to criticism for having granted him citizenship in 2021".**

### Denial

**It wasn't an isolated case. I'd been reprimanded before for being outspoken about the grooming gangs scandal, for calling for lower migration, and for criticising Keir Starmer's decision to sell off the Chagos Islands.**

**The fact is that the Tory Party is so compromised by its own failures in government that it cannot speak for the country and oppose Labour's madness. Even now, despite their public statements, they are privately in cahoots with Labour to cancel local elections in May.**

**That's a dereliction of duty.**

**My decision to defect to Reform was difficult, but it was undoubtedly the right one.**

**I fought for a better Conservative Party. In Cabinet, I tried to secure important changes. To build more houses for our youngsters, to cut immigration and to stop the boats. At first, I spoke up behind the scenes and then increasingly more loudly when my calls fell on deaf ears. But it still wasn't enough.**

**That's why I resigned from the last government when I knew that they weren't serious about stopping the boats, and voted against my party over the sham Rwanda Bill.**

**Since the election, I fought to get the Conservative Party to change, first as a leadership candidate and then from within the Shadow Cabinet.**

**But, over time, it has become clear to me, having seen it up close, that the Conservative Party is too broken to change. There are some very good people in the party, but they are outweighed by people who just don't get it or are in denial.**

**The generations that came before us built a great country. But right now, we're set to lose it. The moment calls for us to set personal ambition aside, speak the truth and act accordingly.**

**Nigel Farage has stood – consistently, and often alone – for what's needed. Ending mass migration. Cheap energy. Cutting waste, taxes and red tape.**

**When the first boats started crossing, he was in the Channel saying it was outrageous. They laughed at him. They're not laughing now.**

**Nigel has the conviction of his principles and is building the team to deliver real change Express readers have been crying out for.**

**And to those sceptical about Reform I say this: they are Britain's last best hope. The Conservative Party is too compromised to deliver. I have seen up close that they haven't changed and would fail again if given the chance. To unite the Right and stop Starmer's disastrous government – or worse, a rainbow coalition of the Greens, Lib Dems and SNP in power – we have to unite behind Nigel.**

**So, I am proud to be Reform's 270,000th member.**

**And to Express readers, I say this: If you're not already on board, join the movement. The country's future depends on you.**

*Nigel Farage welcomes Robert Jenrick to Reform*

# Both promise to save

BY **STEPH SPYRO** Deputy Political Editor
and **MARTYN BROWN** Political Editor

KEMI Badenoch and Robert Jenrick have each vowed to rescue Britain from Labour's grip following their explosive split.

In duelling articles for the Express, both promised to fight for the UK's future after one of Westminster's most dramatic days.

Turmoil erupted on Thursday when Shadow Cabinet minister Mr Jenrick defected to Reform UK, hours after Mrs Badenoch sacked him live on social media.

The leader of the Tories writes today: "Conservatives know Britain cannot be fixed with slogans or grievance politics. It will be fixed with credible, conservative solutions.

"I will not talk this country down when I know how great it can be. I will tell the truth about what is broken – and then I will fix it.

"Britain has faced harder moments than this and emerged stronger every time.

"Labour are making a terrible mess of the country but, as we have done throughout history, I am confident the Conservative Party will be ready to clean up that mess. We have the team, the plans and the experience to ensure we can get Britain working again."

Mr Jenrick insisted his defection to Nigel Farage was "uniting the Right" as he said he had put the country before his allegiance to the Tories. The former immigration minister said: "My decision to defect to Reform was difficult, but it was undoubtedly the right one. I fought to get the Conservative Party to change, first as a leadership candidate and then from within the Shadow Cabinet.

### Denial

"But, over time, it has become clear to me, having seen it up close, that the Conservative Party is too broken to change.

"There are some very good people in the party, but they are outweighed by people who just don't get it or are in denial. The generations that came before us built a great country. But right now, we're set to lose it."

Mr Jenrick added: "The moment calls for us to set personal ambition aside, speak the truth and act accordingly."

A YouGov poll after his exit recorded a seven-point drop in the proportion of 2024 Tory voters with a favourable view of him.

Mr Jenrick's positive favourability rating amongst these voters has now fallen from 30% last October to 23%. One in five (21%) had an unfavourable opinion of the Newark MP in October – two in five (39%) do today.

Some 30% of Reform voters (30%) held a favourable opinion in October and that has

**WRITE FOR EXPRESS**

# COMMENT

## KEMI BADENOCH

### Leader of the Conservative Party

**SOME things in Britain are broken, but they are not broken beyond repair, and I have a plan to fix them.**

**I know that it can feel bad right now. As I travel around the country speaking to voters, I often hear the same complaints.**

**People say the things that once worked no longer do. That hard work does not always pay. That common sense has been replaced by bureaucracy. Communities feel their towns have changed in ways to which they never consented.**

**Our great country has lost confidence in itself, and too many politicians talk Britain down instead of showing they have a plan to build it back up.**

**Well, I do have a plan, and I have the team to deliver it.**

**I know that many Daily Express readers will wonder why you get up early and come home late, while others are able to stay on their sofa, living off your hard work and getting expensive cars for free.**

**Labour and all the other political parties from the Liberal Democrats to Reform and the SNP to Plaid Cymru are either unable, or unwilling, to do anything about this. I'm not.**

**We are the only party committed to bringing back the two-child benefit cap.**

**A future Conservative government would cut the benefits bill and get Britain working again.**

**I know how hard it is for young people today, struggling to get a job in Labour's graduate recruitment crisis, knowing that they will never get on the housing ladder. That is why a future Conservative government will abolish stamp duty on the family home. It is a tax that punishes aspiration and gums up our housing market.**

**Abolishing it will help restore the property-owning democracy that Conservatives believe in. And we can pay for this because of the tough decisions we have taken to find savings elsewhere, such as cutting the welfare bill and shrinking the size of Whitehall.**

**I know how hard it is for small businesses to survive and how our high streets – the heart of our communities – are dying before our eyes. Too many entrepreneurs feel the system is stacked against them. That is why a future Conservative government will abolish business rates for thousands of high street businesses. Thriving small businesses mean stronger local economies, more jobs, and more vibrant communities.**

**I know immigration – legal and illegal – has been far too high, and I am honest enough to say that previous Conservative governments failed on this.**

**That is why I have said we need to take a different approach. A future Conservative government will leave the ECHR, ban asylum claims for illegal arrivals, establish a removals force, and deport those with no right to be here swiftly and fairly.**

**Only the Conservatives are both serious about restoring control and strengthening our borders, and have a proper plan to do so.**

**I also know that industries and households have been squeezed by ideological net-zero targets that ignored cost, security and reality. That is why a future Conservative government will scrap the reckless race to net zero by 2050, cut electricity bills for families and businesses, and back British oil and gas by drilling again in the North Sea. Yes, we want to leave a better environment for the next generation. But we also know that a stronger economy depends on affordable, secure power.**

**And I know that under Labour, Britain cannot properly defend itself. That is why the Conservatives are the only party in Parliament making the case for defence spending to rise to 3% of GDP by 2030.**

**We back our armed forces, and we want to see Labour investing in Britain's troops and our defence industries to keep us safe in an increasingly dangerous world, instead of giving away the Chagos Islands and pursuing our veterans through the courts.**

### Confident

**Labour offers higher taxes, more bureaucracy and a refusal to face hard truths.**

**Reform just want to take us back to the political psychodramas of the past. When I give a press conference, I'm announcing a plan to fix our country and make people's lives better. When Reform gives a press conference, it's always to talk about themselves.**

**Conservatives know Britain cannot be fixed with slogans or grievance politics. It will be fixed with credible, conservative solutions.**

**I will not talk this country down when I know how great it can be. I will tell the truth about what is broken – and then I will fix it.**

**Britain has faced harder moments than this and emerged stronger every time.**

**Labour are making a terrible mess of the country but, as we have done throughout history, I am confident the Conservative Party will be ready to clean up that mess. We have the team, the plans and the experience to ensure we can get Britain working again.**

**EXPRESS VOTE**

**Do you agree with Robert Jenrick that the Conservative Party is broken?**

**YES: 0901 133 4440 NO: 0901 133 4441**

**Yes text DXYES to 63333 No text DXNO to 63333**

(Calls cost 50p plus network access charge; texts cost 50p plus standard network rate)

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# Britain from Labour

risen slightly to 32%. Mr Jenrick yesterday denied to the BBC that personal ambition had played a role in his defection.

He said he hoped Thursday's drama would be seen as "a time when the Right united, when people put aside party loyalties and came together to fix our country". But former leadership rival Mrs Badenoch said she was happy to see him go, calling him "not a team player" and "Nigel Farage's problem".

Mr Jenrick told the BBC it was during the Christmas break that he "resolved" to go but the "final straw" came at a Shadow Cabinet away day last week when he argued with Tory colleagues about whether Britain was "broken". He said some agreed with him that it was, but argued they could not say so publicly since Tories were partly responsible.

Mr Jenrick claimed: "I have been honest with the British people, and that's what matters to me."

### Psychodrama

Mrs Badenoch yesterday ruled out any pact with Reform ahead of the next election.

She said: "How do you do a deal with liars? How do you do a deal with people who have been saying things that were clearly not true, not just for months but clearly for years?" Mrs Badenoch added that Mr Farage had done her "spring cleaning".

She said: "The problems are going, we are even more united than we were, because we're a stronger team… Robert Jenrick was not a team player."

Asked if more "spring cleaning" needed to be done in her party, she said that anyone interested in "psychodrama" should quit.

But the Tory leader told Sky News she is "100% confident" that no further members of her Shadow Cabinet will defect.

Mr Farage set a deadline of May 7, when local elections take place, for anyone else considering defecting to Reform. He said a Labour figure is expected to join on Tuesday and claimed he had spoken to "many, many other senior Conservative figures".

Mr Jenrick is the latest of several prominent Tories who have switched to Reform.

Former vice-chairman Lee Anderson became the party's first MP after he jumped ship in March 2024.

Dame Andrea Jenkyns defected later that year. Others include David Jones, Sir Jake Berry, Nadine Dorries, Jonathan Gullis and, this month, former Chancellor Nadhim Zahawi. The first sitting Tory MP to cross over to Reform was Danny Kruger.

OPINION: PAGE 14

# 'Where does this leave us He has put himself before

BY **PAUL JEEVES** in Newark
and **JONATHAN WALKER**

ROBERT Jenrick is facing calls to quit Parliament and allow a by-election in the East Midlands seat he has represented for 12 years.

Voters in Newark told this newspaper they want the chance to decide for themselves whether Mr Jenrick should continue to represent them after his defection to Reform UK.

Retired NHS nurse Janice Burton, 79, complained: "We don't know where we stand now.

"I feel let down. I voted for him as a Conservative and there was no pre-warning that he would do this.

"Where does this leave us Conservative supporters?

"He has put himself before the people of Newark."

Mr Jenrick has been MP for the Nottinghamshire seat, which includes the market towns of Southwell and Newark-on-Trent, since a 2014 by-election.

But his election wins were under the Tory banner, leaving locals bemused to discover they are now represented by a Reform MP.

## 'I am so glad he has joined Reform and I am sure more MPs will now follow'

Opinion is divided, but many constituents want Mr Jenrick to resign his seat so a fresh vote can be held.

It would allow the politician to try his luck standing for Reform, while the Conservatives could offer a new candidate of their own and let the public decide.

Agricultural consultant Neil Morton, 83, said: "I could not care less about him as he has put himself first. I traditionally voted Conservative but I didn't vote in the last election.

"However, in principle, he should face a by-election so people get the opportunity to choose whether they want a Reform candidate or not."

Nottingham University student Abigail, 20, also urged Mr Jenrick to face the electorate.

She said: "He can get lost as far as I'm concerned.

"There definitely should be a by-election so people can question him about his actions.

"I've never really seen him around town so we deserve somebody far better."

Sue Redman, 62, agreed and said: "He should definitely have to face a by-election.

"He has left the Conservatives and people may not just want to accept Reform. It should be put to the electorate to decide." Farmer and market stall holder Liz Hoggard, 59, was also in favour of a new vote.

She said: "People need to be able to make an informed decision about who their MP is and what they represent.

"I'm not sure how I feel about it because I feel so let down by the Labour government.

"But I do think that if an MP chooses to defect mid-term then the people should get a choice." Not everyone agreed, however.

Engineer Richard Barnes, 61, said he was a fan of the former Shadow Justice Secretary and ex-government minister and didn't think a by-election was necessary.

He said: "I voted for him as a Conservative and I still back him.

"I don't think there should be a by-election but I do think there are questions for him to answer about what he has done". Meanwhile, delighted council worker Emma Woodford, 50, said she has been "waiting for the day" Mr Jenrick quit the Tories.

She added: "I am so glad he has finally joined Reform.

"It's a really good thing and I am sure more MPs will now follow.

"Along with other Reform UK supporters I have been waiting for this moment."

But Emma's daughter Annabel is among those demanding a new poll. The 18-year-old said: "People didn't vote for Reform so I think he should be forced to step down.

"I disagree with all his policies so – 100% – I think there should be a by-election.

"It's just not democratic to change party after being elected."

This is a gamble the former Communities Secretary is unlikely to take. But it might pay off handsomely if he did. Mr Jenrick held the seat as a Conservative last year.

Pensioner Janice Burton believes she and other Tory voters have been let down by their MP

Engineer Richard Barnes says he's a big fan of the former minister and doesn't want a new vote, but student Abigail has told the MP he should face the electorate or 'get lost'

Robert Jenrick's defection is making waves in his market town constituency

Emma Woodford, right, hailed MP's move but daughter Annabel disagrees

**ON JENRICK DEFECTION**

# Conservative supporters? the people of Newark...’

Pictures: ANDY STENNING

Disillusioned Conservative Neil Morton, with wife Susan, calls for a by-election

Market worker Liz Hoggard also wants to go to the polls

It was with a decreased vote share of 39.2% and a lesser majority of 3,572. Labour were second with 20,968 votes and Reform a distant third with 8,280.

But a recent mammoth poll by More in Common found the result could be very different today.

It predicted Reform could get 34% of the vote in Newark, with the Tories narrowly behind on 31%. But the survey findings were published earlier this month before Mr Jenrick’s defection.

Local Tory activists, who delivered leaflets and knocked on doors to help get him elected in the past, are furious.

Conservative Sam Smith, opposition leader of Nottingham County Council, said: “Betrayal is the right word – we worked our absolute socks off in Newark in the General Election.”

Yet, for now, the denizens of Newark are stuck with their Reform representative.

Speaking to the BBC’s Laura Kuenssberg yesterday, Mr Jenrick confirmed that there will be no by-election and vowed to continue working for his constituents “as I always have”.

It followed his statement on Thursday, when he said: “I don’t intend to call a by-election.”

But Mr Jenrick also claimed that his re-election in 2024 may in fact have been down to Reform voters, who backed him despite being the Tory candidate because of his “independent” approach.

He said: “My constituents know I’ll continue to do that, to be the strongest possible voice for them and for the issues they care about and, above all, to hold this failing Labour government to account.

“There are a lot of Reform voters in Newark who decided to bite their tongue and not vote Reform and to vote for me at the last General Election.”

**TO READ ALL THE BEST POLITICAL STORIES OF THE DAY GO TO EXPRESS.CO.UK/POLITICS**

# Tories are ‘stronger than ever’ insists justice replacement

BY **JONATHAN WALKER**
Whitehall Editor

**THE Conservatives are stronger than ever after Robert Jenrick’s defection to Reform UK, his replacement as Shadow Justice Secretary has insisted.**

**Nick Timothy rejected Mr Jenrick’s criticism of other senior Tories, saying the defector’s “characterisation of my Conservative colleagues is completely inaccurate”.**

**The public are “sick of the back-stabbing” and this week’s dramatic events have united Tory MPs behind party leader Kemi Badenoch, Mr Timothy said.**

**He said the reaction among Conservatives was “one of surprise that Rob would do this – but also resolve, because the party, I think, is more united under Kemi’s leadership than I’ve known it for many years”.**

**Mr Timothy, *above*, added: “Rob’s been a friend of mine for some time.**

**“It’s obviously disappointing that he’s decided to move on, but the thing is, what we learned is the clear contrast between the Conservatives led by Kemi Badenoch and the other parties and what they offer Britain today.”**

**Mr Timothy, who previously served as a special adviser in David Cameron’s government and as joint No.10 chief of staff under Theresa May, apologised for aspects of the Tory record during the end of the party’s time in power.**

**He added: “I’ve said as a Conservative I am sorry for the way the party handled certain things in those last few years and I’ve been very open about that since I was elected for the first time 18 months ago.**

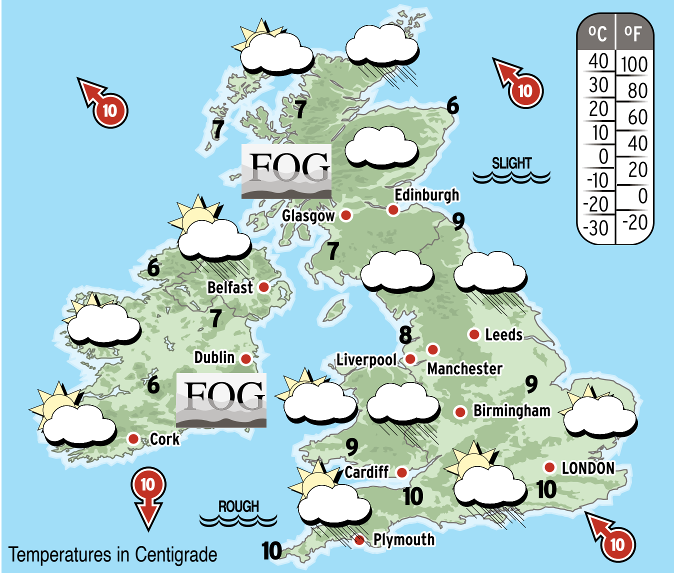
**“The Conservative Party will not move on and not persuade people to vote for us in the future in the numbers that we need unless we do look them in the eye and say we understand why we lost that election.”**

**Mr Timothy said events of the past week illustrated a “lack of seriousness” in other parties.**

**Mr Jenrick had accused former home secretary Dame Priti Patel of creating a migration system “that enabled five million migrants to come here” when he attacked his former party’s record in office.**

**But Tory sources pointed out that Mr Jenrick had previously called Dame Priti “a relentless champion for Conservatism whose experience will be invaluable”.**

# WEATHER FORECAST



Temperatures in Centigrade

## Today's summary: Showers early, cloudy later

**North West:** Wet with rain for a time. A mostly dry afternoon. Moderate north-westerly winds. High 9C (48F).

**Northern Ireland:** Cloudy with light rain early. Brighter spells later. Gentle winds, cool temperatures. High 8C (46F).

**Wales:** Cloudy with drizzle, turning brighter later. Gentle breezes throughout, staying cool. High 9C (48F).

**Midlands:** Rain during the morning. Mainly dry after midday. Moderate north-westerly winds. High 9C (48F).

**North East/Yorks:** Wet with outbreaks of light rain and drizzle expected. Light winds. High 8C (46F).

**Scotland:** Cloudy with drizzle early, clearing to overcast skies. Light winds, becoming cool. High 7C (45F).

**East Anglia:** Grey, with light rain at times during the morning. Gentle southerly winds. High 9C (48F).

**London/South East:** Overcast with showers transitioning to cloudy skies. Light winds, cool throughout. High 10C (50F).

**South:** Scattered showers, although these will become isolated later. Moderate northerly winds. High 10C (50F).

**South West:** Showers at first, but it will be mainly fine and dry. Gentle north-westerly winds. High 11C (52F).

**Channel Isles:** A mostly cloudy day is expected, but staying dry. Brisk westerly winds. High 9C (48F).

**Sea:** North Sea: Slight. Irish Sea: Moderate. Channel: Slight.

**UK OUTLOOK TOMORROW:** Expect cloudy skies with occasional rain showers, mild temperatures, and light winds. A generally unsettled but mild day ahead.

## SIX-DAY FORECAST

Temperatures in Centigrade

| | SUN | | MON | | TUE | | WED | | THU | | FRI | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | min | max | min | max | min | max | min | max | min | max | min | max |
| **London** | 6 | 10 | 5 | 10 | 4 | 10 | 3 | 9 | 2 | 8 | 2 | 7 |
| **Belfast** | 5 | 7 | 5 | 8 | 6 | 8 | 4 | 8 | 4 | 7 | 2 | 6 |
| **Birmingham** | 6 | 8 | 5 | 9 | 4 | 8 | 3 | 7 | 2 | 7 | 1 | 6 |
| **Cardiff** | 5 | 8 | 5 | 8 | 5 | 9 | 3 | 8 | 4 | 8 | 3 | 7 |
| **Glasgow** | 4 | 8 | 4 | 8 | 4 | 8 | 4 | 8 | 3 | 8 | 2 | 6 |
| **Manchester** | 6 | 8 | 6 | 9 | 5 | 9 | 4 | 8 | 3 | 7 | 2 | 6 |
| **Newcastle** | 5 | 7 | 5 | 7 | 4 | 7 | 4 | 7 | 2 | 6 | 1 | 5 |
| **Norwich** | 4 | 9 | 3 | 8 | 3 | 8 | 1 | 7 | 1 | 6 | 1 | 5 |
| **Plymouth** | 6 | 9 | 6 | 10 | 7 | 10 | 6 | 9 | 6 | 9 | 6 | 9 |

## Britain yesterday

| 24 hours to 5pm | SUN (hrs) | RAIN (ins) | TEMP (min) | (max) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Aberdeen** | 2.8 | 0.01 | -5 | 3 |
| **Aberporth** | 1.4 | 0.11 | -1 | 8 |
| **Alnwick** | 3.5 | 0.00 | -2 | 4 |
| **Belfast** | 4.7 | 0.01 | 3 | 9 |
| **Birmingham** | 3.7 | 0.04 | 3 | 8 |
| **B'mouth** | 3.4 | 0.11 | 1 | 10 |
| **Bristol** | 3.4 | 0.02 | 3 | 10 |
| **Cardiff** | 5.8 | 0.04 | 1 | 9 |
| **Durham** | 1.2 | 0.01 | -2 | 4 |
| **Edinburgh** | 1.2 | 0.01 | -4 | 4 |
| **Glasgow** | 0.0 | 0.06 | -1 | 4 |
| **Hull** | 0.1 | 0.06 | 1 | 5 |
| **Ipswich** | 2.3 | 0.09 | 1 | 9 |
| **Leeds** | 2.7 | 0.01 | 0 | 7 |
| **Lincoln** | 0.9 | 0.24 | 3 | 6 |
| **London** | 4.7 | 0.03 | 2 | 10 |
| **Manchester** | 5.5 | 0.02 | 0 | 8 |
| **Oxford** | 5.3 | 0.01 | 0 | 9 |
| **S'hampton** | 2.0 | 0.16 | 5 | 10 |
| **St Andrews** | 1.9 | 0.01 | -4 | 3 |

### Moon, sun and tides

**MOON** rises: 7.43am, sets: 2.33pm
**SUN** rises London: 7.57am, sets: 4.24pm
**Manchester** rises: 8.15am, sets: 4.23pm
● **New Moon** 18 January

**HIGH TIDE**

| | |
|---|---|
| London B'ge | (12.41am), (1.05pm) |
| Liverpool | (10.19am), (10.44pm) |
| Greenock | (11.46am), (11.56pm) |
| Dover | (10.16am), (10.38pm) |

**Britain Extremes:** (24 hours to 11pm Thursday)

**Warmest:** Isles Of Scilly, 11c (51f).
**Coldest:** Topcliffe, 0c (31f).
**Wettest:** Frittenden, 1.05ins.
**Sunniest:** Valley, 6.9hrs.

### Lighting-up times

| | |
|---|---|
| Belfast | 4.33pm-8.33am |
| Birmingham | 4.26pm-8.07am |
| Bristol | 4.34pm-8.06am |
| Glasgow | 4.19pm-8.33am |
| London | 4.24pm-7.56am |
| Manchester | 4.23pm-8.13am |
| Newcastle | 4.13pm-8.18am |

## Europe forecast

| Today | | | Tomorrow | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Amsterdam** | Cloudy | 10C/50F | **Amsterdam** | Fog | 6C/43F |
| **Brussels** | Fair | 11C/52F | **Brussels** | Sunny | 8C/46F |
| **Dublin** | Rain | 8C/46F | **Dublin** | Fair | 8C/46F |
| **Frankfurt** | Fair | 5C/41F | **Frankfurt** | Cloudy | 6C/43F |
| **Geneva** | Cloudy | 8C/46F | **Geneva** | Fair | 9C/48F |
| **Lisbon** | Showers | 12C/54F | **Lisbon** | Sunny | 13C/55F |
| **Madrid** | Rain | 8C/46F | **Madrid** | Fair | 10C/50F |
| **Paris** | Cloudy | 11C/52F | **Paris** | Fair | 11C/52F |
| **Rome** | Sunny | 16C/61F | **Rome** | Rain | 16C/61F |

## Around the world yesterday

| | | C | F |
|---|---|---|---|
| Amsterdam | Cloudy | 9 | 48 |
| Athens | Sunny | 15 | 59 |
| Barcelona | Cloudy | 11 | 52 |
| Berlin | Sunny | 6 | 43 |
| Budapest | Cloudy | 1 | 34 |
| Cairo | Sunny | 18 | 64 |
| Cape Town | - | 21 | 70 |
| Casablanca | Rain | 14 | 57 |
| Corfu | Cloudy | 15 | 59 |
| Dublin | Fair | 8 | 46 |
| Dubrovnik | Cloudy | 14 | 57 |
| Faro | Shwrs | 15 | 59 |
| Florence | Fair | 14 | 57 |
| Gibraltar | Shwrs | 14 | 57 |
| Guernsey | Fair | 10 | 50 |
| Hong Kong | Sunny | 22 | 72 |
| Istanbul | Cloudy | 10 | 50 |
| Jersey | Fair | 9 | 48 |
| Larnaca | Sunny | 18 | 64 |
| Las Palmas | Fair | 20 | 68 |
| Los Angeles | Sunny | 27 | 81 |
| Luxor | Sunny | 19 | 66 |
| Malaga | Cloudy | 14 | 57 |
| Mallorca | Fair | 16 | 61 |
| Malta | Shwrs | 16 | 61 |
| Melbourne | Fair | 23 | 73 |
| Miami | Shwrs | 19 | 66 |
| Moscow | Cloudy | -10 | 14 |
| Nairobi | Sunny | 26 | 79 |
| New Delhi | Sunny | 18 | 64 |
| New York | Fair | 3 | 37 |
| Nice | Drizzle | 12 | 54 |
| Nicosia | Fair | 16 | 61 |
| Perth | Sunny | 34 | 93 |
| Prague | Cloudy | 0 | 32 |
| Singapore | Fair | 30 | 86 |
| Stockholm | Cloudy | 3 | 37 |
| Sydney | Fair | 23 | 73 |
| Tel Aviv | Fair | 18 | 64 |
| Tenerife | Sunny | 21 | 70 |
| Toronto | Snow | -13 | 9 |
| Tunis | Cloudy | 17 | 63 |
| Venice | Cloudy | 8 | 46 |
| Vienna | Mist | 0 | 32 |
| Warsaw | Cloudy | -4 | 25 |

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# Jewish fans' ban police boss quits

BY **MICHAEL KNOWLES** Home Affairs Editor
and **JONATHAN WALKER** Whitehall Editor

CHIEF Constable Craig Guildford has quit over the scandal around Israeli football fans being banned from a game in Birmingham.

Mr Guildford, who is set to keep his pension, defied weeks of calls for him to be booted out but last night policing chiefs said he is retiring from his £220,000-a-year role.

That prompted fresh fury, and demands for West Midlands' Labour Police and Crime Commissioner Simon Foster to go too.

Mr Guildford's exit comes after Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood said she had lost confidence in the head of West Midlands Police, as falsified intelligence had led to Maccabi Tel Aviv supporters being barred from a match against Aston Villa last year.

## Pressure

She said the force "overstated" any threat posed by visiting fans while underplaying the risk of violence by local Islamist mobs.

A police watchdog probe had found some intelligence about travelling Jewish supporters was "exaggerated" and "untrue". Mr Foster refused to fire the police chief as he tried to cling on but pressure built and No10 said it too had lost confidence in him.

Last night Mr Foster announced: "Craig Guildford has today retired.

"He has acted with honour and in the best interests of West Midlands Police and our region. I welcome his decision."

He praised Mr Guildford's "many positive achievements", adding: "West Midlands Police have been subjected to understandable, intense and significant oversight and scrutiny as a consequence of events that led to the recommendation it made to the safety advisory group. I have today appointed Deputy Chief Constable Scott Green as the acting Chief Constable."

Chief Constable Guildford giving evidence to MPs

Ms Mahmood said the watchdog report's had "set out a catalogue of failings". Mr Guildford may still face a standards probe.

Shadow Home Secretary Chris Philp declared that "allowing Islamists to force the banning of Maccabi Tel Aviv fans and then fabricating evidence to pretend the ban was because of the Maccabi fans' own behaviour was disgraceful".

Gideon Falter, of the Campaign Against Antisemitism, said: "Focus must now turn to the Islamists who browbeat the police into carrying out their wishes to ban Jews."

Last night Mr Guildford said that the "frenzy" around his position had become "detrimental" to the force, and his retirement was "in the best interests of the organisation, myself and my family".

---

McKenzie Morgan, 18

# 'Southport plot copycat' teen is jailed

BY **EMILY PENNINK**

A WOULD-be Southport copycat killer who wanted to attack a dance school and an Oasis concert has been locked up for 14 months.

McKenzie Morgan, 18, from Cwmbran, South Wales, told friends of plans to target the gig in Cardiff on July 4.

And he had a note singling out a dance club near his home, the Old Bailey heard.

On a messaging app, he revealed he had tried to make ricin. Morgan pleaded guilty to possessing a document useful for terrorism.

Sentencing him to youth detention yesterday judge Sarah Whitehouse KC also imposed a criminal behaviour order to supervise him upon his release and a further year on licence.

She said Morgan was a danger to himself and "vulnerable to being bullied, groomed and radicalised".

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# Body found in hunt for girl swept out to sea

BY **DAVE HIGGENS**

A BODY has been found two weeks after a 15-year-old girl was swept out to sea.

Police said yesterday it had yet to be recovered from rocks due to harsh conditions at Withernsea, East Yorks, but the family of Grace Keeling had been told of the news.

Grace vanished on January 2. Her mum, Sarah, 45, and passer-by Mark Ratcliffe, 67, died after going into the waves to rescue her.

The body was found near Holmpton Road in the town on Thursday.

DS Simon Vickers said: "Due to tide times and conditions...it was not possible to carry out a safe recovery."

He added: "The location was secured overnight using specialist equipment and a cordon remains in place.

"Officers and specialist teams have been working to explore every possible option in very complex circumstances.

"The recovery could not be immediately carried out and has therefore been paused until it is safe.

"Whilst no formal identification has taken place at this time, we recognise that this discovery comes after 15-year-old Grace Keeling was swept into the water."

DS Vickers asked the public "to refrain from speculation with consideration and respect" and to avoid the area, to allow emergency services staff to work safely.

# OAP couple die in blaze

BY **STEPHEN BEECH**

AN elderly couple have died in a fire at their North London home.

The man and woman, both aged 90, were pronounced dead at the scene by medics.

Flames tore through the semi-detached property in Barnet in the early hours of yesterday.

London Fire Brigade said the cause of the tragic blaze, which began on the ground floor, is under investigation.

A neighbour confirmed the victims were a couple who had lived locally for 50 years.

The woman said: "They were a really sweet couple. Everyone's quite shocked."

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**FIGHT FOR WOMEN-ONLY SPACES**

# Nurses win 'victory for common sense'

## Ruling says NHS trust DID harass them over trans row

Darlington nurses talk to media after tribunal win

BY **GILES SHELDRICK** Chief Reporter

A GROUP of nurses are celebrating a "victory for common sense" after winning a landmark legal battle against the NHS trust that made them share a changing room with a male colleague.

An employment tribunal yesterday ruled they were victims of harassment and sex discrimination after County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust allowed a biological male trans woman to undress in front them.

Its policy of allowing men into women's spaces is unlawful and violates the rights of its female staff, the court found.

Bethany Hutchison, 36, who led the historic challenge, said: "This is a victory for common sense and for every woman who simply wants to feel safe at work."

The mum of two added: "Women deserve access to single-sex spaces without fear or intimidation.

### Degrading

"Forcing us to undress in front of a man was not only degrading but dangerous. The ruling sends a clear message – the NHS cannot ignore women's rights in the name of ideology. We stood up because we knew this was wrong. No woman should be forced to choose between her job and her safety.

"This ruling is a turning point and we will keep fighting until every woman in the NHS is guaranteed the dignity and protection she deserves."

Harry Potter author and women's rights campaigner JK Rowling posted her congratulations on X, writing: "Women have the right not to undress in front of men at work.

"Twenty years ago, that sentence would have been a statement of such obviousness people would have laughed at you for saying it aloud.

"Now it's a matter for celebration. Congratulations, you heroines."

Nurses hug after tribunal decision

Another NHS nurse, Sandie Peggie, who had a partial victory in a claim against NHS Fife after she complained about being forced to share changing facilities with a trans doctor, said she was "overjoyed" by the outcome.

She added: "I am overjoyed the Darlington nurses have succeeded in their claims against their employer and the tribunal, unlike the employment tribunal who heard my case, has ruled an employer does unlawfully harass female employees by requiring them to share changing rooms with biological males.

"I am grateful to the Darlington nurses for the courage they have shown which has strengthened my determination to continue with an appeal to overturn the judgment in my case."

A panel headed by employment judge Seamus Sweeney heard how NHS bosses "penalised" female nurses on a day care ward at Darlington Memorial Hospital after they complained and were targeted under the trust's transitioning in the workplace policy.

They took action after Rose Henderson, who identifies as female, used the same changing room. The tribunal found Ms Henderson had not harassed colleagues but they should not have been made to use the same facilities. The ruling has plunged the public sector into chaos, as concern grows about NHS policies that prioritise gender identity over sex-based protections.

The Supreme Court last year ruled the terms "woman" and "sex" in the Equality Act refer only to a biological woman and to biological sex, with subsequent guidance from the equality watchdog banning trans people from using toilets and other services.

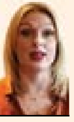
Yesterday's ruling piles pressure on government to ensure the public sector adheres to the law. Equalities Minister Bridget Phillipson is due to publish guidance on single-sex spaces after Equalities and Human Rights Commission recommendations.

County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust said: "We will comment once we have had the opportunity to consider it in full."

OPINION: PAGE 14

## COMMENT

### BETHANY HUTCHISON



**Darlington nurse and President of the Darlington Nursing Union**

**FOR more than a year, my colleagues and I have been fighting for something so simple, so basic, that it should never have required a court case – the right for women to have safe, single-sex spaces at work.**

**The tribunal confirmed yesterday what we knew from the start.**

**That what happened to us was unlawful and that the NHS trust failed in its duty to protect our dignity and our safety.**

**We never asked for special treatment. We asked only to be able to undress for work without a man being present.**

**Instead, we were told to "broaden our mindset", to "be inclusive", and to accept that a biological male could use the women's changing rooms simply because he said he was a woman.**

**When we raised safeguarding concerns, concerns no reasonable person could dismiss, we were the ones pushed aside, belittled, and forced into a makeshift "temporary" space that was unsafe and dehumanising.**

**This case was never about ideology for us. It was about truth, biology, fairness – and the basic protections that the Equality Act was designed to uphold.**

**The tribunal's ruling affirms that women's rights cannot be overwritten by internal policies or political pressure.**

**It affirms that our concerns were legitimate and that the trust's treatment of us was discriminatory and unlawful. But this judgment must also serve as a warning.**

**Across the NHS, there are countless women who feel they cannot speak, who fear being labelled or punished for wanting the privacy and safety they are entitled to.**

**The government has still not published the lawful guidance from the Equality and Human Rights Commission.**

**NHS leadership continues to prioritise ideological policies over the real needs of frontline staff.**

**Our victory is a step forward – not just for us, but for every woman in the NHS.**

**We hope it gives others the courage to speak and we urge those in authority to finally listen. Women deserve better. And we will keep standing up until they get it.**

# Nobel warns Trump over prize 'transfer'

BY **STEPHEN BEECH**

**DONALD Trump sparked a row with Nobel Peace Prize officials after he was gifted the medal won by Venezuela's opposition leader.**

**The award committee hit out, saying the honours "cannot be revoked, shared or transferred".**

**It came after the US president, 79, was pictured smiling in the Oval Office holding the 2025 Nobel Peace Prize awarded to Maria Corina Machado.**

**Ms Machado, 58, said she gave her award to Mr Trump following the US intervention in Venezuela that resulted in the capture of the state's president Nicolás Maduro and his wife. However, Norway's Nobel Committee swiftly insisted that prizes "cannot be gifted'.**

**The committee said: "A medal can change owners, but the title of Nobel Peace Prize laureate cannot. Once a Nobel Prize is announced, it cannot be revoked, shared or transferred to others. The decision is final and stands for all time."**

**Mr Trump posted on his Truth Social site, said: "It was my Great Honor to meet María Corina Machado. She is a wonderful woman who has been through so much. María presented me with her Nobel Peace Prize for the work I have done. Such a wonderful gesture of mutual respect." Ms Machado fled Venezuela after she was briefly detained in Caracas last year.**

**The US is working with Maduro's deputy, Delcy Rodriguez, who was named the acting president.**

**● President Trump warned the US may pull out of Nato if its allies don't agree with its acquisition of Greenland. He also suggested he may punish countries with tariffs if they do not back US plans to take control of the Danish territory.**

**He said: "I may put a tariff on countries if they don't go along with Greenland...we need Greenland for national security."**

To President Donald J. Trump

Trump beams as Ms Machado hands him her Nobel medal

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# Man jailed for murder of his wife after re-trial

BY **TRISTAN KIRK**

A MAN who killed his wife and manipulated his own child in a "wicked" plot to get away with murder has been jailed for life – eight years after being cleared of the crime.

Robert Rhodes, 52, cut wife Dawn's throat at their Surrey home in 2016 as their marriage crumbled.

He plotted the murder for months, and duped their child – who was under 10 – into helping him carry out the fatal attack.

Rhodes, a carpenter, then spun a web of lies to pretend he had inflicted the fatal wound to his wife in self-defence and "gaslit" his child into supporting his false story.

He thought he had got away with it when he was acquitted at an Old Bailey trial in 2017.

But, in 2021, his traumatised child told a therapist and then the police what had really happened.

Rhodes had stabbed himself and slashed his child's arm after murdering his wife, to bolster his claim that he had been defending himself. At Inner London crown court yesterday, judge Mrs Justice Ellenbogen sentenced Rhodes to life in prison for the murder with a minimum term of 29 and a half years.

Rhodes was also found guilty in December of two counts of perjury for false evidence at his Old Bailey trial and in the family courts in 2018, perverting the course of justice, and child cruelty.

The judge imposed concurrent jail sentences for those charges.

Previously, a person could not be retried for the same offence after being cleared, but the double jeopardy law in England changed in 2005 to allow a second trial for the most serious offences.

The child, who cannot be named for legal reasons, told the court: "Robert Rhodes' actions and my mental health struggles will forever affect me and impact the rest of my life."

Rhodes, from Withleigh, Devon, denied all the charges against him at his second trial. He refused to come to court to face his sentencing hearing.

The judge branded Rhodes a "coward" for refusing to leave his prison cell.

Convicted murderer Robert Rhodes

# Prostate cancer therapy boost

BY **HANNA GEISSLER**

THOUSANDS of men with prostate cancer will be given a life-extending drug on the NHS, following a three-year battle to expand access.

Abiraterone, which stops the production of testosterone to slow tumour growth, was already available to men whose cancer had spread.

But NHS England will now offer it to men with high-risk cancer that has not yet spread.

The decision could save 3,000 patients' lives over the next five years.

Around 2,000 men diagnosed in the last three months will get the drug if it is of clinical benefit, while a further 7,000 each year are likely to be eligible.

Trials show the proportion of men alive after six years on abiraterone is 86% compared to 77% on standard care.

# Paracetamol is 'not autism risk'

BY **HANNA GEISSLER**

TAKING paracetamol during pregnancy does not increase the risk of autism, ADHD or intellectual disabilities among children, a major study said.

A rigorous review of evidence was launched after Donald Trump falsely claimed the drug was driving a "meteoric rise" in autism.

In the Lancet study researchers led by City St George's, University of London, analysed data from 43 studies involving more than a million children.

They showed no link between paracetamol use in pregnancy and childhood autism, ADHD or intellectual disability.

Professor Asma Khalil said: "The message is clear – paracetamol remains a safe option during pregnancy when taken as guided."

**Jessica Brady died after her cancer was missed at more than 20 GP visits**

# Three strikes... then ask your GP for a rethink

BY **HANNA GEISSLER**
Health Editor

**FAMILY doctors have been told to "think again" if they see sick patients three times without improvement.**

**Jess's Rule asks GPs to reconsider their approach if problems are not resolved after three appointments.**

**The guidelines have been introduced in honour of Jessica Brady, who died of cancer aged 27. She had visited her GP more than 20 times in just five months.**

## Opinion

**The talented engineer was diagnosed with stage four adenocarcinoma only after getting private help. She died in hospital three weeks later.**

**Patients can ask GPs to take a "fresh eyes" approach if they have not been given a diagnosis or their symptoms have escalated. That could involve asking a colleague's opinion or a face-to-face consultation where remote appointments were given.**

**Jess's mum Andrea Brady said the approach aimed to "ensure serious illnesses, including cancer, are identified and treated earlier – a goal I remain hopeful will be achieved".**

**She added: "Throughout her illness, Jess showed a quiet determination that her experience should lead to meaningful change.**

**"I am so incredibly proud of my caring and courageous daughter.**

**"Jess's Rule posters have now been distributed to all GP practices in England and are expected to be displayed in consultation rooms."**

**Health Secretary Wes Streeting said: "Every patient deserves to be heard, and every serious illness deserves to be caught early.**

**"This is a fitting tribute to Jessica Brady and the tireless campaigning of her parents. Their determination to turn tragedy into lasting change will help protect patients and save lives for years to come."**

# Drug sold online kills hundreds

EXCLUSIVE

BY **JONATHAN WALKER**
Whitehall Editor

BRITAIN is in the grip of a "hidden" drugs epidemic that has killed hundreds – with narcotics stronger than heroin sold online.

The true scale of the problem is unknown, but a report warns the number of deaths could be far higher than official figures show.

Addicts are turning to nitazenes, a class of synthetic drug with similar affects to heroin. It comes after the Taliban cracked down on opium production in Afghanistan and China blocked exports of fentanyl, another synthetic drug, which has wreaked havoc in the US.

Young people self-medicating for conditions such ADHD and anxiety are unwittingly buying products online that contain the drug.

Official Home Office figures show nitazenes have been linked to more than 750 deaths since mid-2023.

But a probe by think tank Onward highlighted "inconsistencies and gaps in official data".

It concluded: "Nitazene deaths in the UK have climbed at a dramatic pace since 2022 and are probably even higher than official estimates."

Niles Webb, author of the Onward report, said: "This is not a moral panic about drug use. It is a warning about what happens when global criminal supply chains adapt faster than the British state."

The substance can be up to 500 times stronger than heroin.

The Home Office has been asked for comment.

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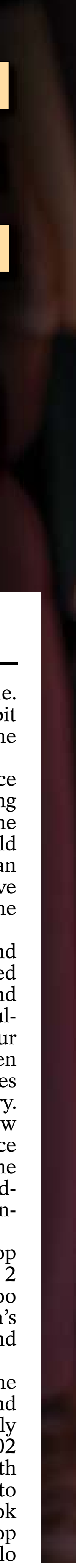
Attending Mel B's wedding last July with son Beau and husband Jade

# BABY SPICE AT 50

## Mum, charity advocate and entrepreneur, Emma Bunton is busier than ever as she hits milestone birthday



By **Hannah Britt**

TO her legions of fans, Emma Bunton will forever be Baby Spice, known for her girlish style, sweet manner and bouncy blonde bunches.

But as she turns 50 this week, and what with raising awareness of menopause, running her own business and advocating for charities filling a big part of her life these days, perhaps Midlife Spice would be a more appropriate name.

Like her bandmates and the millions of original Spice Girl lovers who bought Wannabe and 2 Become 1 on CD or tape in 1996, the pop star and Heart radio presenter is entering the sixth decade of her life.

Emma, who reaches her milestone birthday on Wednesday, is the youngest of the five Spice Girls.

At 53, Geri Halliwell is the oldest, followed by Mel C – who turned 52 on Monday – Lady Victoria Beckham at 51, and Mel B at 50. And as is the case for their fans, midlife means juggling responsibilities.

For mum-of-two Emma that means being involved with the business she co-founded eight years ago, Kit & Kin, which makes sustainable baby and cleaning products.

She is also an author: her best-selling book, Mama You Got This: A Little Helping Hand For New Parents, came out in 2021.

The star has devoted a lot of time to giving back. She is an ambassador for inclusive theatre company Chickenshed and children's rights charity Unicef, has worked with The King's Trust and regularly supports BBC Children in Need.

Then there is her Sunday show on Heart Radio plus her candidness about how menopause affected her libido and gave her brain fog.

Emma says she would have been a florist if she had not found fame. She had pursued acting, with bit parts in EastEnders (1992) and The Bill (1993).

But when she joined the Spice Girls after seeing an ad for aspiring singers in The Stage magazine, she became part of a band who would make history, selling more than 100 million records, winning five BRIT awards and becoming the best-selling girl group of all time.

With, Scary, Ginger, Posh and Sporty Spice, Emma performed alongside Sir Rod Stewart and Ronan Keating and rubbed shoulders with Nelson Mandela, Labour Prime Minister Tony Blair, Queen Elizabeth II, Prince Charles and Prince Harry.

Auditioning for the Spice Girls in 1994

In a whirlwind few years the Spice Girls had nine No1 hits, including three consecutive Christmas top spots with 2 Become 1, Too Much (Emma's favourite) and Goodbye.

Geri left the band in 1998 and the group eventually split in 2001. In 2002 Emma signed a solo deal with Simon Fuller's label 19, going on to reach No1 with single What Took You So Long, plus seven further top 10 hits. She has had four solo albums and 16 singles.

SIMON said of her: "Emma is young, talented and ambitious."

After that came a cameo in Absolutely Fabulous and a turn on Strictly in 2006, when she came third with professional partner Darren Bennett.

Still close to her fellow Spice Girls, Emma attended Victoria's

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Emma has been a Heart Radio host since 2013

Together again for Spice Girls' comeback tour in 2007

With bandmates Victoria, Geri, Mel B and Mel C in 1996

Netflix premiere and Mel B's wedding last year and wished Mel C a happy birthday last week on Instagram.

And there are bound to be some of their old hits playing at her own birthday bash. Emma is not shy about reprising some of her 90s moves.

She revealed on ITV's This Morning: "If someone plays Wannabe at a party, I'll be on the dance floor. The kids are now listening to it, and there's a whole new generation coming through." Emma wed singer-songwriter and long-term love Jade Jones, who was in R&B band Damage, in July 2021.

From little girl to Girl Power

They met in 1998, with Emma saying: "It was love at first sight."

They have two sons: Beau, 18, and Tate, now 14. Describing her family, Emma said: "We're very close and we spend a lot of time at home together.

"They're quite proud of Mummy and Daddy. And they love hearing about the Spice Girls." She went on: "I've kept everything from my Spice Girls days: the costumes, the mics.

"I've tried my Buffalos [huge platform shoes the band often wore] on and they still fit.

"I get them out from time to time. It was such a special time. I still listen to all the songs."

Keen to get back on the road, she told one interviewer: "My kids would love another Spice Girls tour too. A reunion. And it is something that us as the Spice Girls talk about a lot, too."

Their fans would probably be even keener to see them reunite. There was a comeback tour of all five members in 2007 and when the Spice Girls (minus Victoria) reformed in 2019, the first London date of their Spice World tour sold out in just 38 seconds. In his 2024 book, Dispatches From a Life in Rock and Roll, PR guru Alan Edwards said: "The Spice Girls were very much like the Sex Pistols.

"They lived this tabloid life and everything was larger than life and crazy. They were hilarious. They were like cartoon characters."

Taylor Swift and Blake Lively are said to be "superfans" – a video of Emma interviewing Gossip Girl star Blake last year went viral.

EMMA has not revealed what she will be doing to celebrate turning 50, or if any of her celebrity pals – who include comedian Leigh Francis, TV hosts Christine Lampard and Holly Willoughby, All Saints singers Natalie and Nicole Appleton and ex-Sugababe Heidi Range – will be there.

She is known to be a fan of celebrity hotspots Soho House and the restaurant at Mayfair's Mandarin Oriental hotel – but is equally fond of a meal at home in North London.She said recently: "There's a lovely restaurant near my house that does takeaway specially for me."

Birthday wishes are already coming in. Heart Radio colleague Jamie Theakston said: "We've had fun times. So many happy memories, thank you for being you."

A BBC Children in Need spokesman said: "Emma is a hugely valued supporter. From Pudsey and everyone at BBC Children in Need, we'd like to wish her a huge happy 50th birthday!"

And Unicef UK boss Philip Goodwin sent his best, said: "It's wonderful to celebrate Emma Bunton, Unicef UK ambassador, as she marks her 50th birthday.

"We're so grateful for all of her support over the years. Thank you, Emma and happy birthday!"

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## End the rivalry and save Britain from toxic Labour

ONLY time will tell whether Robert Jenrick made the right move when he joined Reform UK.

The rivalry between the Conservatives and Reform UK is intense and personal but Kemi Badenoch and Nigel Farage's top priority must be bringing this wretched Labour government to an end as soon as possible.

We have given Mr Jenrick and Mrs Badenoch the opportunity in today's Daily Express to address you directly as the dust settles on an explosive moment in British politics.

Thursday was a day of high drama in the Westminster village when the Tory leader sacked Mr Jenrick and he then showed up afterwards at a press conference called by Reform.

But this is not the moment for the two centre-right parties to turn their guns on each other; Labour is doing extraordinary harm to this country, killing jobs and undermining Brexit.

It is frightening to imagine the utter destruction the party will unleash if it is in power for a decade.

Mrs Badenoch and Mr Jenrick are two of the stand-out talents of their generation with a deep appreciation of how Britain needs to be rescued from the soggy yet toxic socialism of Sir Keir Starmer and Rachel Reeves.

There is no shame in politicians having huge personal ambitions just so long as these are matched with ambition for the country.

As was made clear in the Tory leadership election, both Mrs Badenoch and Mr Jenrick have the best interests of Britain at heart; they want to earn a place in the history books for having secured our borders, revived prosperity and made this great but embattled land a better place to work and raise a family.

If only we had a Prime Minister and a Chancellor who shared their vision and their values.

This U-turning Labour government lacks a moral compass and has proven itself incompetent; the fierce competition between Reform and the Tories for the votes of everyone dismayed at Labour's callous and careless record so far must not distract from their common mission of rescuing the country from the Left.

In their separate parties, the Tory leader and Reform's newest MP will take the fight to Labour and hopefully the country will benefit from a change of Government.

Britain will celebrate if the next occupant of No10 has the much-needed common sense of a Badenoch, Farage or, indeed, a Jenrick.

## A long-awaited victory

CONGRATULATIONS to the Darlington nurses who have won an important victory. A tribunal had found their NHS trust violated their dignity by requiring them to share a changing room with a biological male trans woman and did not take their concerns seriously.

They should never have been put in this position, nor should they have had to wait so long for vindication.

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# Political difference must come second to country's future

Nigel Farage welcomes Tory high-value pelt Robert Jenrick to the ranks of Reform

**Sam Lister**
**Deputy Editor**

NIGEL Farage celebrated Robert Jenrick's defection to Reform with a glass of champagne and declared it was the moment that marked the "realignment of the Right". But was the spectacular day of high drama the point that Reform sealed the deal or the formation of a circular firing squad that only benefits the Left?

Each of the main players – Farage, Jenrick and Kemi Badenoch – has taken a massive gamble. Although speculation about Jenrick's intentions has been intense ever since he lost the Conservative leadership contest to Badenoch, the way his departure unfolded left Westminster stunned. No one had got wind of his intention to jump ship, apart from, it seems, one of his team, who alerted the Tory leader.

Instead of dealing with it behind the scenes, Badenoch revealed she had sacked him in a video posted on social media that is one of possibly the most brutal firings in modern politics – and the bar for that is already set incredibly high.

It was a shock and awe move that showed would-be defectors that their leader is ruthless and has chutzpah.

It also sends out a message to voters that Badenoch is trying to move the party on from its in-fighting days.

But it has caused fury among Jenrick's allies who feel the way it was handled was unnecessary and it will leave them considering their options.

THE incident could set off a whole chain of events that Badenoch has not predicted.

For Farage, the risks are potentially bigger. Bringing on board a man who clearly has his sights firmly on No 10 is something the Reform leader will be keeping an eye on.

But a second big Tory in the space of a couple of days – he follows on from former Cabinet minister Nadhim Zahawi – leaves the Reform leader open to the accusation that his party is morphing into a version of the Conservatives.

Farage has always said he will only take on figures from the rival camp if they have something good to offer and Jenrick definitely ticks that box. He has years of Cabinet experience, high energy and understands the mood of the country has shifted in a way that many in Westminster remain completely oblivious to.

But Jenrick's long-tenure in the top ranks of the Tories will be a stick used by opponents to beat them with. And supporters will need plenty of reassurance that Reform remains true to the ideals it was set up with.

The gamble for Jenrick is: has he backed the right gang? Reform's rise seems unstoppable but there are still potentially three years until a general election. When Boris Johnson was elected with a good majority, it was widely expected he would be Prime Minister for a decade, but a pandemic and a war, plus a number of party crises soon put paid to that.

Keir Starmer secured a bigger majority but will be lucky to hang on past May. British politics is much more volatile than during the Thatcher and Blair eras

Jenrick also faces being treated with suspicion by those that were there from the early days. Will he be welcomed or sidelined by those who see him as a rival?

What is clear from the way that the sacking and defection played out is that this is a deeply personal grudge match now between Badenoch, Farage and Jenrick.

But their personal gambles are nothing compared to the impact this could all have on the country. We have been landed, almost by default, with a government of staggering incompetence that has a sinister authoritarian streak that runs through its core.

It has failed to deliver on its promises while forcing on us seismic decisions that it was too cowardly to put before voters.

BUSINESSES are in despair, illegal migrants are laughing all the way to their hotels and taxpayers are left with increasingly little reward for their hard work. If the growing animosity between the Tories and Reform is a splintering of the Right rather than realignment, then the only beneficiary is this destructive Labour government.

The Left has always fallen into the trap of putting ideological purity over gaining power and the Right must not make the same mistake. Narrow political differences and personal ambitions must come second to the country's future.

There is a real danger of a form of mutual destruction that allows Labour to slip back in because the Right is divided. Both sides must remember who their true enemies are, this slippery, sinister socialist government and it must be defeated.

**'This slippery, sinister socialist government is the true enemy'**

# Carole Malone

FUN, FEISTY AND FEARLESS

Email me at carole.malone@reachplc.com ● Follow me on Twitter @thecarolemalone

# Reform your goals, Kemi

**KEMI CAN spin Jenrick's sacking in a way that makes her look like a big strong decisive leader. But let's face it – she only sacked him because he was going anyway. She just got in first and pushed him before he jumped. That wasn't about good leadership. It was about saving face – hers!**

YOU'VE got to feel sorry for Reform's new Scottish leader, Lord Malcolm Offord. Thursday was supposed to be his big day. Nigel Farage was announcing him to the world at a flashy press conference but just a few minutes in came the news that Kemi Badenoch had sacked Robert Jenrick because he was defecting to Reform. After that no one was interested in Lord Offord. He was toast – sitting for the rest of the press conference like a (superfluous) lemon and the next day all the front pages were about Farage and Jenrick!

Lord Offord was last heard shouting: "What about me?"

**BRITAIN'S biggest teaching union, the National Education Union, has hired a top KC to investigate accusations of "institutional anti-semitism".**

**Shouldn't be too hard. A video circulating online shows the union's vile leader, Daniel Kebede, *inset*, screaming "globalise the intifada". Case closed M'lud!**

PETER Mandelson says he didn't realise Epstein was a pervert who trafficked girls – because he's gay. Is he blind, deaf and dumb too?

**WE NEED to face reality – Ed Miliband is never going to save the planet. The muppet can't even save us £300 a year on our electricity bills.**

NEARLY 300,000 abortions were carried out in 2023 – 72% of them courtesy of the morning after pill. Experts reckon these shocking stats reflect the rising cost of living. Or could it just be people increasingly don't respect the sanctity of life, couldn't be bothered to use contraception and took Morning After pills in the same way they'd take a couple of paracetamol after a heavy night out?

ROBERT Jenrick couldn't be clearer. "I respect the Tory leader, but she has as much chance of being PM as the Green's boss Zack Polanski." And that, in a nutshell, is why he defected to Reform. Who wants to be on the losing side?

Who wants to be in a party with a leader who'll never be PM and who despises the bloke who will be so much she reiterated this week that she'd never do a deal "with Reform liars"?

That's the kind of blind intransigence that'll consign the Tories to the political dustbin. And Jenrick saw that.

People keep talking about the Kemi "bounce" and about how she's turning the Tories around with her gutsy performances at the despatch box where she regularly eviscerates Starmer.

Well, if she's that good – why all the defections (Nadhim Zahawi also jumped ship this week)? Why is a gap-toothed dope like Zack Polanski still beating her in the polls?

The Tories only look like they're doing better because Starmer and Labour are doing so catastrophically badly. Since his defection, Jenrick's former Tory colleagues have been slating him as a traitorous turncoat driven mad by personal ambition. And what the hell's wrong with that. Better to be driven by ambition than blindly plod towards obscurity which the Tories are.

Love him or loathe him, Jenrick talks about the issues that affect people's lives – just like Reform. He's a great communicator – just like Farage is. Yes, he's a slippery self-promoter but most politicians are – the difference being that Jenrick is also effective.

He's also slated the Tories as "rotten", "dishonest" and not willing to change and said they "broke" Britain.

He's right. And Labour's breaking what's left of it. He's also right when he says neither Labour nor the Tories has the guts to do what needs to be done. And that's exactly why millions WILL vote Reform – because Farage has. We know he'll be ruthless on immigration. We know he'll tear up the human rights act. We know he'll take on scroungers and liggers who get billions in benefits. We know he'll support business because he's run small businesses for 30 years and knows how hard it is. We also know he'll tackle the creeping Islamisation of this country. Farage's unique strength is that he doesn't tip-toe around the tough stuff. He instinctively understands what affects people's lives and has, without doubt been THE most influential politician of the last 50 years.

He made Brexit happen for God's sake when he didn't even have a parliamentary seat. And he made it okay for Britons to voice their very real fears about mass illegal immigration without being slated as racists.

YES, THE party is in its infancy, but polls show its saying exactly what Brits are desperate to hear because they're sick of Labour's lies. They're furious about broken promises and they're terrified of an increasingly authoritarian government that's determined to stamp out free speech and puts everyone above hard-working Brits – foreign criminals, illegal migrants, benefit scroungers. They see a government working against the interests of the British and they want one which will be on their side. And they believe Reform will be.

In the same way Trump says America first, Farage says Britain and its people first. And that's what Brits want.

If Kemi really was a strong, ruthless leader, she'd see the only hope of kicking out the bunch of shysters running this country – especially the dud in No 10 – is to join forces with Reform. The right-wing vote is split and, come the election, there must be a Tory-Reform pact – otherwise it opens the door to the catastrophic scenario of a Labour-Lib Dem one. So, if Kemi really cares about this country, she needs to think about that!

Picture: PENSKE MEDIA/ GETTY

## A great body of work too, J Lo

**YES, THE dress J Lo wore to the Golden Globes was a showstopper but the only message it screamed was: "Look at me, I've got a beautiful body, haven't I?" Did she really have to be this obvious?**

**I remember a time when J Lo's name was synonymous with fantastic acting and singing. Now she spends her life posting a zillion selfies of – yep, her beautiful body!**

**EXPERTS now say that puberty blockers STILL haven't even been proven safe for animals, yet this irresponsible government is about to start a trial on more than 220 gender confused children, some as young as eight?**

KILLERS and violent thugs detained in hospital – like Valdo Calocane who murdered three people on a knife rampage – will now lose benefits of up to £800 a month thanks to a change in the law.

Are we supposed to be grateful for that? Why the hell were they getting benefits in the first place? They've killed innocent people. They're entitled to nothing.

**SERIAL killer Levi Bellfield needed hospital treatment after he had a severe allergic reaction to a coconut face cream. Oh good! Let's hope it was nothing trivial!**

AFTER a £22.5million lotto win in 1995 which he split with pal Paul Maddison, Mark Gardiner splashed out on a luxury home in Barbados, invested in a football club and bought a six-bedroom mansion in East Sussex complete with gigantic pool.

Now he's selling the East Sussex gaff because he says he no longer needs the space.

Translated. He's blown all the cash! Eeejit!

## PLIGHT OF IRAN'S FREEDOM PROTESTERS SEEMS LOST ON THOSE LEFTIE LUVVIES

*SO WHERE have all the Leftie luvvies been this week as freedom fighting protesters in Iran were being executed on the streets.*

*Where was the outrage at young women having their bones snapped and their eyes gouged out before being executed by the bloodthirsty bastards who claimed to be doing it in the name of God.*

*Where was Gary Lineker? Where was Greta? Where was the army of self-righteous Leftie luvvies (and the BBC for that matter) who're forever banging on about Palestine but don't seem to give a stuff about the wholesale slaughter of innocent Iranians?*

*Is it because Iranians are the wrong kind of victims for them? Are the luvvies only interested in the demonisation of Jews?*

*Hypocrites, the lot of them!*

DAILY EXPRESSO DON'T MISS CAROLE MALONE EVERY WEDNESDAY ON OUR YOUTUBE CHANNEL'S DAILY EXPRESSO SHOW ▶

# Our Pride of Britain heroes enjoy a fabulous cruise holiday

## Three inspirational Pride of Britain winners recall their dream trip to the Caribbean courtesy of P&O Cruises

**A football fan who raised over £340,000 for charity selling samosas, a mother who dived into the sea to save a boy from drowning, and a five-year-old girl whose courage helped her rebuild her life after losing both legs.**

These are just three inspirational winners from Pride of Britain 2024. Chosen from tens of thousands of public nominations, the heroes were honoured at a glittering London ceremony.

P&O Cruises, the new headline partner for the Pride of Britain Awards, gifted each of the 12 winners a fantastic cruise holiday to the Caribbean.

We caught up with three heroes who enjoyed a 14-night adventure together on board Britannia.

### BOOK *YOUR* CARIBBEAN ADVENTURE

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## ‘Aiyla loved the kids’ club’

### Aiyla Mota, Child of Courage

Just before her fourth birthday, Aiyla fell ill with sepsis, which caused multiple organ failure, and doctors were forced to amputate both her legs and five fingers. Now five, Aiyla's recovery has amazed everyone, earning her a Pride of Britain Award as one of the youngest-ever winners.

Her mother, Eulanda, 29, says: “Aiyla has always had a bubbly personality. My nan says it's as if she knows she got a second chance at life.

“The cruise was a once-in-a-lifetime holiday. Aiyla really loved the kids' club and staying up late!

“For me, Barbados was special. My family came from there, and I really felt a connection.”

## ‘The crew were so friendly’

### Emily Greenwood, Outstanding Bravery

Emily was walking along a Cornish beach with her son, Isaac, when a 10-year-old boy and a man were caught in a riptide. After pushing Isaac's wheelchair to safety, Emily, 53, dived into the icy water, swimming 400m to reach the pair.

Her bravery earned her a Pride of Britain award, as well as a cruise holiday gifted by P&O Cruises. “It was a dream holiday,” says Emily. “The crew were incredible, especially where Isaac was concerned.

“We loved the beaches. Isaac has a special beach wheelchair, so he could enjoy the warm water. Being able to relax together in such beautiful surroundings was unforgettable.”

PRIDE OF BRITAIN

## ‘Unforgettable sunsets from our balcony’

### Manny Singh Kang, ITV Fundraiser of the Year

Manny has been raising money for Dementia UK for seven years. In 2018, the lifelong Wolverhampton Wanderers fan began offering home-made samosas outside the ground in return for donations. Since then, his Samosa Saturdays and endurance challenges have raised over £340,000.

“I'm a Sikh, and an important part of our faith is about trying to serve your community,” says Manny, 52.

“The most glorious thing was seeing the sun rise and set from our balcony,” he adds. “Aruba and St Kitts and Nevis stood out. It was a wonderful gesture by P&O Cruises.”

PRIDE OF BRITAIN

**Inspired by the winners' Caribbean holiday? Visit pocruises.com**

P&O CRUISES

CONGRATULATIONS
AIDEN
ON YOUR 111 MILE SWIM

Aiden Boka after completing his pool challenge and, left, in his wheelchair

# Aiden takes the plunge to raise money for charity

EXCLUSIVE

BY **HANNA GEISSLER** Health Editor

A TEENAGER with a lifelong liver condition has completed a gruelling swimming challenge to raise money to buy a vital wheelchair attachment.

Aiden Boka, 13, earned the nickname "hot wheels" from pals after a personalised wheelchair from charity Whizz Kidz transformed his life.

With his new independence, he decided to go a step further, raising funds for a power add-on.

The teenager, from Brecon, South Wales, set himself the challenge of swimming 111 miles, the distance from his home to Birmingham Children's Hospital where he has regular treatment.

Supported by family, friends and the local community, he completed 7,145 lengths of a 25m pool at Brecon Leisure Centre.

Mum Annabelle, 35, said: "We spent numerous days up at the leisure centre, it was crazy.

"But with the help of his swimming club, we smashed it. Before we knew it, we had it.

"It snowballed, which was amazing and it showed people his resilience."

Aiden raised the £3,500 needed for the attachment and donated additional funds to Whizz Kidz.

His condition – portal cavernoma – causes high pressure in the portal vein, leading to complications such as an enlarged spleen, low platelet counts and frequent nosebleeds. On many days walking is too painful or risky.

Annabelle said of Whizz Kidz: "They have changed our lives. We're not sitting trying to work out how we're going to get around on our day out as a family. We don't need to worry about Aiden getting too tired. We can live a better life than we could ever have done before."

The charity provided two adapted buggies that were easy to fold and transport up and down the hills of Brecon, then a full wheelchair.

And the help did not stop there. Whizz Kidz also introduced the schoolboy to adaptive activities, including scuba diving, surfing and ice-skating in his wheelchair.

Annabelle said: "If it wasn't for Whizz Kidz, I would never have been able to afford this stuff. It is totally out of my league.

"When he had the first chair, I was a single parent. I had no money left over at the end of the month. I had three children, including one that needs a lot of hospital visits. It would have been impossible for me to afford.

"That's when Whizz Kidz stepped in and was able to take that burden off my shoulders and make things better."

The Daily Express Give the Gift of Childhood appeal has raised more than £100,000 for Whizz Kidz, following overwhelming support from our loyal readers.

A team of four journalists from the paper will jump out of a plane at 10,000ft this weekend in a final push to raise funds.

EXPRESS
CHRISTMAS APPEAL
GIVE THE GIFT OF CHILDHOOD

## AT LAST, I COULD START LIVING LIFE

*Sophie's chair a gamechanger*

BY **HANNA GEISSLER**

**SOPHIE Dearman spent years thinking there was something wrong with her before she realised a poorly fitted wheelchair was further limiting her mobility.**

**The 30-year-old, who has represented Wales at the British Transplant Games, had used an NHS wheelchair, which she found difficult to push without injuring herself.**

**Six years ago Sophie, from Carmarthenshire, was told by a physiotherapist it was worsening her disability.**

### Independent

**But she discovered a Whizz Kidz pilot scheme in Wales, which helped her find the right chair and provided power-assisted wheels.**

**Sophie now works for the charity as a volunteering co-ordinator. She said: "Before, I just thought there was something wrong with me. I had had to turn down a place at Swansea University because I couldn't manage independently.**

**"I know that actually it wasn't me, it was the chair.**

**"I could apply for a job, get it, and start living my life."**

## HOW YOU CAN DONATE

**ONLINE:** Visit www.whizz-kidz.org.uk/express

**BY TEXT:** Text EXPRESS to 70085 to donate £20*

**Texts will cost the donation amount plus one standard network rate message, and you'll be opting into hearing more from us. If you would like to donate but don't wish to hear more from us, please text EXPRESSNOINFO instead.*

**BY CHEQUE:** Please make cheques payable to Whizz Kidz, and post to Daily Express Appeal, Whizz Kidz, 30 Park Street, London SE1 9AQ, together with this completed form.

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GIFT AID Declaration (if applicable): If you're a UK taxpayer, we can claim Gift Aid on your donation at no extra cost to you.

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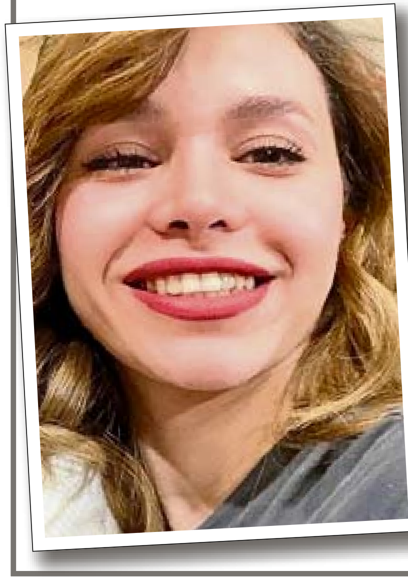
# A Golden display of hypocrisy

**J** THE silence has been deafening. More than 2,000 freedom-seekers in Iran – many of them women oppressed and despised by their government – murdered by a despotic regime that has controlled and terrorised them for decades. But not a peep out of a single celebrity; not a murmur from any A-lister who wouldn't hesitate to speak out on Gaza and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Not one. Not a single one. Did you see the Golden Globes earlier this week? Plenty of virtue-signalers on display there all right; plenty of those all too quick on the draw when it comes to opinionating on Middle East politics – just as long as those politics are confined to Israel-Palestine. Plenty of lapel pins calling for a ceasefire in Gaza (er, there is one, guys, tenuous as it may be, or hadn't you noticed?) but not a sign, slogan or syllable supporting the anti-government protestors who have been risking their lives – and paying with them, in their hundreds, daily – to win freedom in Iraq.

And hadn't these Golden Globers, many of them self-proclaimed feminists, clocked that there is a feminist revolution underway on the streets of Tehran and dozens of other Iranian towns and cities?

Are they unaware that for their entire lifetime (in many women's cases) they have endured the brutal yoke of male oppression? Beaten to death for not wearing the hijab?



Jailed and tortured for daring to show their hair in public or argue with religious police goons? Utterly disempowered and denigrated for having the XX chromosome, not the XY?

These women have been INCREDIBLE over the last few days. Openly lighting cigarettes with burning photos of their hated oppressor, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

Marching and calling for liberation, often under sniper fire. Or more direct fire – as in the case of student Rubina Aminian, 23, *left*, shot in the back of the head as she joined a protest rally from college.

Not a solitary word about any of it at the oh-so-correct Golden Globes. Shame on the lot of them. Shame.

**R THE King seemingly isn't hanging about with the eviction of his de-princed, de-duked, de-medalled younger brother. It's full steam ahead with Andrew's order of the boot from Royal Lodge at Windsor. Reportedly as many as six workmen were seen this week crawling all over Andy's new home, Marsh Farm on Charles's Norfolk estate at Sandringham. They were especially busy on Tuesday, despite pouring rain, erecting 6ft-high security fences around the property.**

**A digger was seen on Marsh Farm's front lawn and electricians were constantly in and out of outbuildings, powering them up for Mr Mountbatten-Windsor's arrival, now thought to be scheduled for as early as the end of the month. Charles is absolutely right to put a rush on the job. It's terrible PR for the public to see a disgraced Andrew grimly hanging on to his privileged life in that Windsor mansion. Excommunications, like executions, should be swift. Another king – Macbeth – had it right. "If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well it were done quickly."**

# Richard&Judy

BRITAIN'S BEST-LOVED HUSBAND AND WIFE TEAM REFLECT ON THE WEEK'S EVENTS EVERY SATURDAY IN YOUR DAILY EXPRESS

**J** **LOVING Sofia Barclay as DS Havers in new detective drama Lynley. She's gloriously stroppy, sarcastic and... well, FUNNY. She had a great line in last week's opening episode, telling her posh, aristocratic new police partner Inspector Lynley: "My parents are big in the iron and steel industry... my mother irons and my father steals." But a good line needs good delivery: Barclay's was pitch-perfect. Episode two on Monday saw her settling nicely into the role; although Leo Suter, in the lead as Lynley, is extremely watchable (and extremely good-looking) it's Barclay's Havers who steals the show. Takes after her dad, obviously.**

## Law breaks common-sense limits

**R** A BRISK walking pace is, give or take the odd stumble, around 4mph. Four miles an hour. Get caught driving at that strolling pace above the 20mph speed limit, and not only will you face a hefty fine, but you'll get three points on your licence.

Points remain "current" for three years. So if those last three take your total in that period to a dozen... kapow. You lose your licence. For at least six months, sometimes for 12. All depends on the whim of your local magistrate.

Disqualified from driving for going at 24 instead of 20? Where does that even begin to make sense, or serve justice?

Don't misunderstand me: if you're caught breaking the speed limit, either on a police hand-held device or a yellow street camera, then yes, you should be fined. Be given points too, if you were significantly above the limit.

But points and disqualification for driving at a walking pace faster than the 20mph limit (which, by the way, is incredibly easy to do – especially if you've spent a lifetime observing 30mph limits, now arbitrarily cut by a third).

I saw a headline this week. "Speeding Verve star fined £2,500: banned for six months." I figured singer Richard Ashcroft must have been going like a bat out of hell somewhere or other.

**Nonsense to ban drivers over a walking pace speed increase, above, Ashcroft**

Turns out he was on a motorway: a 40mph stretch of the M4. He was clocked at just 8mph over the limit.

Already on nine points after three earlier speeding offences inside the three-year span, he automatically lost his licence to drive. For doing 48 in a 40? I'm sorry, but that's just ludicrous. We need a sliding scale of punishment (as we apply in most other criminal and civil offences), not this arbitrary, inflexible code.

Yes, magistrates have discretion, which they applied in the recent case of actor Colin Salmon. Salmon found himself in court for (you've guessed it) driving at 24mph in a 20mph zone. His three points took him to 12 but their worships wisely suspended a ban because Salmon cares for his seriously ill wife and daughter.

He still got whacked over £1,000 in fine and costs though. For driving equivalent to a walking pace over the limit.

I always set my automatic speed control at 20mph when driving in town. Even so, it's possible to break the limit. The other day I was on a dual carriageway behind a road-gritting lorry spraying masses of salt and grit all over me. He was doing around 18 mph, so I briefly accelerated to get past his clattering hailstorm. I hit 25mph for a second before dropping back to 20.

If I'd been in sight of a speed camera at that precise moment... three points and fined hundreds of pounds. Discretion? I could've whistled for it.

Many suspect that these heavy-handed speeding fines are purely to enrich the public purse. If that IS partly their purpose, why impose points too for minor offences? Surely it's better to keep those drivers on the road and coughing up small fortunes for exceeding the limit by... let's all say it together now... FOUR MILES PER HOUR.

You know it makes sense.

**R** **I THOUGHT the following might cheer some of you up. I've been doing a little basic astronomy. Believe it or not, this weekend already marks a month since the winter solstice; the shortest day/longest night. Depending on where in the UK you live, back on December 21 we were talking around seven hours and 50 minutes of daylight against a Stygian 16-plus hours of dark and gloom. Ergh.**

**But what a difference a month makes. Today, good people, you will enjoy a full eight-and-a-half hours of sunlight and a steadily shrinking 15 and a half hours of darkness. Earth is tilting back towards the sun at an increasing pace.**

**It turns its northern face towards our star faster and faster as we approach the spring equinox on March 20: that means in only a couple of weeks we'll already have well over nine hours of daylight! Hurrah!**

**Just thought you'd like to know. It's easy to get lost in the January gloom.**

## GRACEFUL RACHEL CALLS OUT AGEIST TROLLS

**J** **EXTRAORDINARILY nasty, sneering comments were made online this week about British actress Rachel Ward. Even by social media's twisted, grisly standards, the unfairness and sheer viciousness was something to behold. Rachel – star of Eighties TV smash The Thorn Birds, with Richard Chamberlain – dared to post a snap of herself, now 69, on her Australian beef cattle farm. It was a cheerful image of a working, outdoors woman; a very different image from her 25-year-old, glammed-up self. Obviously.**

**But the trolls dived in, with deeply personal attacks on how she'd "let herself go".**

**Ward hit back. "I just feel sorry for those poor souls who fear ageing so much."**

**Well said, Rach!**

**SATURDAY'S BIG READ**

**MARTYN BROWN**
**Political Editor**

# China dilemma: British interests

NO TO CHINA'S
MEGA EMBASSY
SPY BASE IN LONDON

Jailed democracy campaigner Jimmy Lai is an issue for Keir Starmer

Christopher Berry, left, and Christopher Cash, right, were accused of spying for China but the charges were dropped weeks before trial

FOR all the talk of Keir Starmer's "reset" with the EU, another perhaps even more consequential reboot has been taking place in the past year.

Britain is seeking closer ties with China.

In just under a fortnight's time Sir Keir is expected to travel to Beijing for the first visit by a British Prime Minister since Theresa May's arrival in early 2018.

It will be a significant and controversial moment, considering the UK's relationship with the Communist state has been somewhat icy during the intervening eight years.

But it is also inevitable as China – despite the best efforts of Donald Trump – is fast becoming the dominant superpower of the 21st century.

The Prime Minister hopes that forging improved relations with Beijing will help the UK tap into the Chinese behemoth as he attempts to revive our spluttering economy.

During Baroness May's visit, the business delegation signed deals worth £9billion with the Chinese. The current incumbent of No10 will be hoping for more of the same on his trip to the Far East.

But, as tempting as the riches of Cathay are, political controversies loom large.

The proposed Chinese mega-embassy in the heart of London sparked a backlash amid fears it may become a "spy hub".

Sir Keir's visit, when he will meet President Xi Jinping in China's capital as well as focus on trade and business in Shanghai, was widely rumoured to be contingent on the building being approved.

> **'I don't think the current government has been firm enough in getting the message across'**

Shadow Home Secretary Chris Philp has accused the Prime Minister of a "craven kowtow" to the Chinese as he tries to persuade them to "bail him out of the economic mess he and Rachel Reeves have created".

The Tory MP was unflinching in his condemnation of the embassy project, warning that Sir Keir is putting our national security at risk by acting as "Peking's poodle" and the "ultimate useful idiot".

There are also significant security concerns about cosying up to China, not least after a furore over a collapsed case involving ex-parliamentary researcher Christopher Cash and teacher Christopher Berry, who were accused of gathering sensitive UK information for China. Charges were dropped.

Another thorny diplomatic issue is the issue of British national Jimmy Lai.

The Hong Kong-based pro-democracy campaigner and media tycoon has been found guilty of colluding with foreign forces under the region's controversial national security law.

The 78-year-old, who has been in jail since December 2020, pleaded not guilty.

He faces life in prison and is expected to be sentenced within days.

Taiwan is another potential diplomatic booby trap for Sir Keir as China continues to menace the country it regards as its own.

Britain, the US and the rest of the West don't agree. Despite the government's rhetoric some observers say Labour has been too soft in standing up to China on the matter.

President Trump's recent capture of Nicolas Maduro and subsequent claim that America would now "run" Venezuela has set alarm bells ringing louder in the South China Sea. One senior diplomatic figure said: "It's not too much of a leap to expect China to think that 'if the USA can do that then why can't we do the same in Taiwan'.

"I don't think the current UK government has been firm enough in getting the message across to Beijing that Taiwan is off limits – at all costs."

Then there is the tricky subject of the Uyghurs, a persecuted largely-Muslim ethnic group in north-west China.

China's closeness with Russia is another major source of contention, particularly as the bloodshed in Ukraine continues. Despite these issues, Labour has been laying the groundwork to move back into the Chinese orbit for a long time.

Chancellor Rachel Reeves, David Lammy when he was Foreign Secretary, Business and Trade Secretary Peter Kyle and Energy Secretary Ed Miliband have all gone east in the 18 months since Labour came to power.

Sir Keir himself has been dropping hints for weeks that he will be following suit. First, in his Guildhall speech last month, the PM noted how President Trump met President Xi in October.

Meanwhile, his French counterpart Emmanuel Macron will have visited China three times since 2018 – and German leaders have visited four times.

"Yet, during this same period, no British Prime Minister has visited China," the Labour leader bemoaned.

"And until I met President Xi last November [at the G20 summit in Brazil], there had been no leader-level meeting at all

**WITH ECONOMIC POWERHOUSE**

# Can Keir stand up for and cosy up to Beijing?

Sir Keir meets President Xi in Brazil in 2024; far left, London protest against China embassy; and proposed site next to the Tower of London

for six years.” He did admit at the Guildhall that China “poses real national security threats to the United Kingdom”.

But Sir Keir continued: “The absence of engagement is just staggering – a dereliction of duty. Because it means that, unlike our allies, we have not been standing up for our interests.”

Then he declared: “Well, no more.”

In his speech to the Parliamentary Labour Party this week, reacting to criticism of him being “Never Here Keir”, the PM spoke of a “volatile world” and said: “You have to be on the pitch. You have to be in the room.”

Britain has been in the economic doldrums for some time whereas China now runs the world’s second-largest economy, topped only by America.

Under President Xi’s Belt and Road Initiative, China has invested in some 150 countries around the globe to boost its own economic fortunes.

It has also gradually been buying up Britain, purchasing UK gilts as well as companies – either completely or in part. China’s international business influence now includes multiple much-loved British brands which have also proved attractive to individuals and state-owned outfits based in the Communist state.

Well-known names now fully or partly owned by Chinese money include brewer Greene King, London’s Walkie Talkie tower block at 20 Fenchurch Street, Vodafone Three, Heathrow Airport and Hinkley Point C nuclear power station. More than 200 British assets have been snapped up by Chinese and Hong-Kong based government agencies at a combined cost of £135bn amid the rapid growth of the state-owned China Investment Corporation, Beijing’s sovereign wealth fund.

All of this leaves the UK vulnerable to pressure from Beijing, which has a record of using debt as leverage.

Sir Keir clearly believes Britain needs to be on China’s good side. But that shouldn’t stop him quizzing Beijing.

# It's good Ricky and I don't do the same thing

## Bestselling author Jane Fallon on personal ambition, being an introvert and not competing with her famous comedian partner

**EXCLUSIVE**

By **Karen Rockett**

AS THE long-term love of Britain's richest comedian, it would be all too easy for Jane Fallon to look fabulous on the red carpet from time to time and simply sit back and enjoy the trappings of his fame and fortune.

But that's never been the style of the award-winning TV producer-turned-bestselling author. In fact Jane is busier than ever, having this week published her 14th novel, Welcome to the Neighbourhood.

The 65-year-old has always been a grafter, and built two hugely successful careers long before partner Ricky Gervais, 64, hit the big time with comedy series The Office in 2001.

With his reported £130million fortune built from various Netflix deals, live tours, drinks adverts and a property portfolio, Jane need never type another word again. So why does she?

"Oh I couldn't give up writing, I don't know what I would do with myself," she tells me. "It's how I see myself and it is what I always wanted to do.

"Besides, I still haven't had a No1 bestseller yet – only on e-book, not a real book – so I still have that to aim for."

Her hugely popular 2006 novel, Getting Rid of Matthew, is finally being made into a movie – starring Heather Graham – with filming starting this spring.

Jane, who started dating Gervais more than 40 years ago, says: "My books do often get optioned for film or TV and then something happens and it all falls apart, so I have learned not to get my hopes up.

"But this time it is looking really promising and I am really excited about it, although I'm not allowed to talk too much about it."

Her books make ideal TV or film adaptations because, having honed her writing skills as a scriptwriter on EastEnders, Jane is the mistress of the cliffhanger.

"I was at EastEnders during the time of the Phil and Grant Mitchell and Sharon love triangle, and when Frank Butcher left Pat and when David Wicks discovered he was Bianca's dad," she says.

"As scriptwriters it was always about creating a dramatic cliffhanger for the end of the episode.

"I only wished I'd been at EastEnders for Den and Angie, but that was before my time. I don't watch it now though."

Her time on the BBC One soap was followed by a number of award-winning TV series, including This Life, 20 Things To Do Before You're 30 and Teachers.

"In the end, though, I felt it was time to take the plunge and try writing books full-time – although I had already been writing rubbish ones in secret for a long while," she says.

"I really admire people who manage to write while holding down another career, and I know I was very lucky that I didn't have to financially.

"Besides, I had always been freelance in TV, so when I said I was leaving, I always thought I could go back if things didn't work out."

Jane and Ricky in the early years and, main, in 2022

JANE believes that writing in a dramatic soap-style way about the ups and downs of relationships has heavily influenced her story-telling.

"The biggest compliment for me is when a reader says they couldn't put it down and had to carry on reading the next chapter," she says.

However, partner Ricky doesn't even pick them up in the first place.

Jane says he is "not much of a reader", but is thrilled by her success. "Of course he is incredibly proud of me," she adds. "We are totally proud of each other and happy for each other's successes. We are really lucky, but I think it is good that we don't do the same thing.

"I think that could be really difficult – like if you are both actors and one is more successful than the other."

The couple met when they were students at University College London. Within two years they were living together in a one-room flat above a brothel in Kings Cross.

"We drive past it sometimes," she laughs. "It's still there."

Home is now a £15million mansion in Hampstead, north London. They moved into the nine-bedroom pad, which boasts a spa and gym, in 2024. It was moving house that gave Jane the inspiration for her new book, about friendship and jealousy.

"It got me thinking about moving to a new area and what if you did that completely on your own and didn't know a single soul like my character Kitty does," she says.

"Obviously the book is an extreme version of what could happen when you don't really know what people are like."

Unlike her protagonist, who is desperate to ingratiate herself with her super-cool neighbours – who turn out to be nothing like they seem – Jane isn't much of a mixer.

"I would never join a social group or neighbourhood group or anything like that," she says with a shudder.

"I have never been a particularly social person. I have always been very introverted. I am from a big family, which makes it harder to stand out."

She loves nothing better than being alone at home writing. "But I am friendly to the neighbours," she says with a laugh. "I do say hello to people!"

Born in Harrow, Jane grew up in Buckinghamshire, living in a flat above the newsagents run by her parents. She attended a convent school in Slough before studying

**Jane's writing and Roxette, pictured, have inspired a musical**

**Heather Graham will star in a new film of 2006 novel**

history at university – writing for the department's magazine as well as the student newspaper.

These days, the lifelong insomniac rises "knackered at 5am" to write when the house is quiet and there are no distractions from Ricky, emails or work calls.

But, she says, promoting her work on book tours isn't really her thing.

"I am shy and although it is lovely to meet readers, if I have anything in the diary to promote a book a few months ahead, I worry and stress about it," she explains.

"I am just not good with crowds. Perhaps if readers could just come to my house one at a time for five minutes..."

Little wonder then that Jane loves the Brontë sisters and their books, written when the siblings were ensconced in a house on the isolated Yorkshire Moors.

"I love their female characters, these put-upon interesting women who are not just obsessed with getting married," she says.

Jane and Ricky have never felt the need to get married after 45 years together, and it is clear the idea bores them both.

"I am not interested in romance and I find it lazy when people call my books 'chick lit' because they are not really romances," says Jane. "Yes, I have more women then men as readers, although I do get men coming up to me sheepishly to say they read my books."

**'I am not interested in romance and I find it lazy when people call my books chick lit'**

Someone once described her fiction as "chick noir", a label that Jane prefers and says make her happier, as it feels like her "natural place".

She adds: "There is a dark undertone to them, and while no actual crimes like a murder are committed, social crimes are committed. There is a nastiness about some of my characters.

"People say my books are always about revenge, and that is true. I am interested in revenge. I feel my writing is going to get darker and edgier." Jane is already working on her 15th novel and is delighted that her 2008 book Got Your Back has inspired Joyride! The Musical, featuring the songs of Swedish pop duo Roxette.

The show, which premiered at the Malmö Opera in Sweden in 2024, is currently in Stockholm and expected to come to the UK.

IT TELLS a revenge-fuelled story of infidelity, with music and choreography influenced by Marie Fredriksson, who died in 2019, aged 61, and her Roxette bandmate Per Gessle.

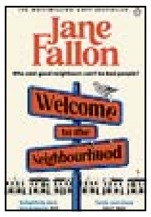
"It was so random and unexpected that Got Your Back was made into a musical but I just love musicals and it is brilliant," says Jane. "I really hope it comes here."

As time goes on, she says it becomes harder to think of new plots, stories and characters. Yet she believes her writing is still improving.

"I recently read Got Your Back again and thought, why did I write it like that? So I do think I am getting better.

"When I first started writing I used to be so self-conscious. It's so easy to over-think it. Now when I write I think of it as having a conversation with a close friend, telling them a story. It somehow makes it easier."

- *Welcome to the Neighbourhood (Penguin Books, £9.99) is available in all good bookshops and online now*



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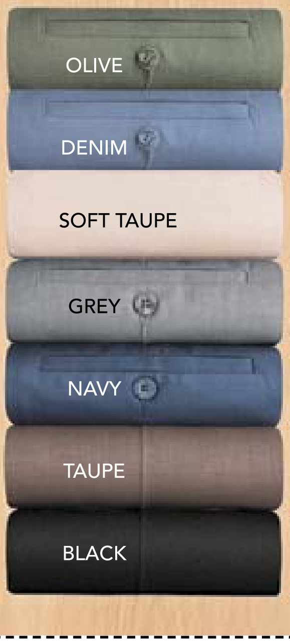

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Singer Cheryl Tweedy, 42

# Killer back in jail on Cheryl stalking rap

BY **ELLIE NG**

A CONVICTED killer who stalked Girls Aloud star Cheryl Tweedy has been recalled to prison after breaching his licence conditions.

Daniel Bannister, 51, was jailed for 12 months last September after turning up at the singer's Buckinghamshire home for a fourth time.

A recall warrant was issued on Tuesday after his release from prison.

Bannister had been found with alcohol at his bail hostel, the Sun reported.

HM Prison and Probation Service said: "We do not hesitate to send offenders back to prison where necessary if they break the rules."

Bannister is expected to remain in custody until the end of his sentence.

Dame Penny feared violence

# Dame Penny pest is jailed for 20 weeks

BY **BEN MITCHELL**

A FORMER councillor has been jailed for 20 weeks for stalking Dame Penny Mordaunt.

"Creepy" Edward Brandt sent multiple emails and phone messages to the former Tory leadership candidate.

He also turned up at her office after hours.

Brandt, 61, was found guilty at Southampton crown court of stalking, but cleared of a more serious charge of stalking causing serious alarm or distress.

Dame Penny told police she "feared sexual violence" because of his "creepy" behaviour.

Brandt was jailed for 12 weeks for stalking and eight weeks to run consecutively for stalking order breaches.

The star tries cake, jokes at candles, and, below, in 1965

# Dolly's on fire for her 80th

BY **FRANCES MILLAR**

**DOLLY Parton is marking her 80th birthday on Monday with a new charity single featuring a host of famous friends.**

**A video teaser for Light of a Clear Blue Morning, shared with her 8.2 million Instagram followers, shows pop singer Miley Cyrus, country stars Lainey Wilson and Reba McEntire, and rapper turned actress Queen Latifah in the studio, singing alongside a choir.**

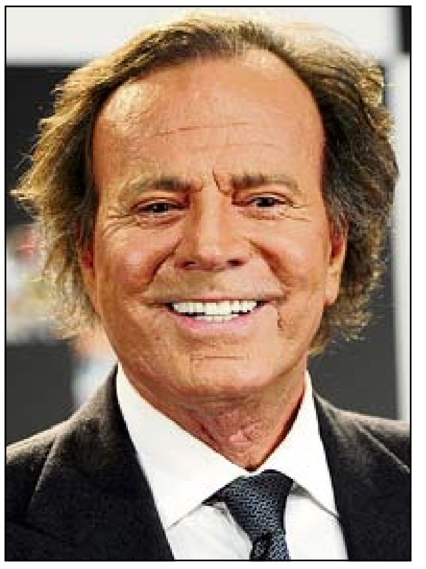
**Dolly says in the message: "I first wrote this song back in 1976 when I needed a little hope. And this time around I've invited some very special women to help me bring that hope to life again."**

**Proceeds will go to paediatric cancer research at a Nashville hospital.**

**Dolly has donated millions of dollars over the years to causes including disaster relief, education and medical research funding support for Covid vaccines.**

# Iglesias denies claims of abuse and coercion

BY **LAUREN DEL FABBRO**



Julio Iglesias, 82, is accused of sex abuse

SINGER Julio Iglesias has insisted he has never "abused, coerced or disrespected" any woman after claims he treated an employee "like a slave".

The Spanish megastar, 82, has been accused of sexual assault by two women who worked at his Caribbean mansions in 2021.

One of his accusers is a domestic worker, who described feeling like an "object" for the singer.

And a physical therapist said Iglesias "normalised abuse" in his residence.

The claims follow a three-year probe by media in Spain. Prosecutors there have now opened an inquiry.

Iglesias, who has sold 300 million records, said yesterday: "I am responding to the allegations from two people who used to work in my house.

"I have never abused, coerced or disrespected any woman. These accusations are absolutely false." The investigation reported that Rebeca, whose name has been changed to protect her identity, said the A-lister would regularly call her to his room at the end of the day and would touch her inappropriately without consent.

It is also alleged Iglesias had forced her to take part in threesomes with another female member of staff.

## Terror

The BBC reported her saying: "He used me almost every night. I felt like an object, like a slave."

She described one of Iglesias's residences as a "little house of terror because it is a nightmare – something truly horrible".

Laura, also not her real name, said Iglesias had touched her breasts and kissed her on the mouth against her will. She added that he controlled how much food she ate and asked her about when her period was due.

The events allegedly took place in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic, and Lyford Cay in the Bahamas.

Advocacy groups Women's Link Worldwide and Amnesty International said the acts alleged in the complaint could be considered "a crime of human trafficking for the purpose of forced labour" and "crimes against sexual freedom".

Testimony collected by those organisations said Iglesias "regularly checked their phones and restricted their ability to leave the home".

And it is alleged the singer, who topped the charts with Begin The Beguine in 1981 and is worth around £460million, made them "work up to 16 hours a day without days off".

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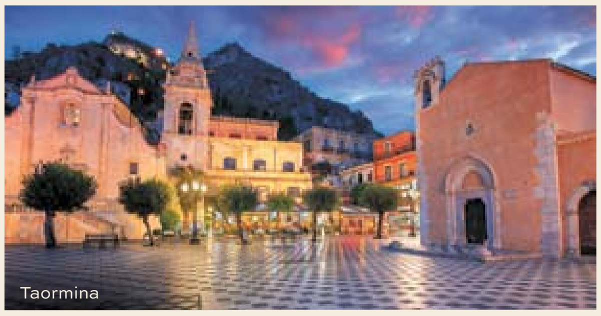

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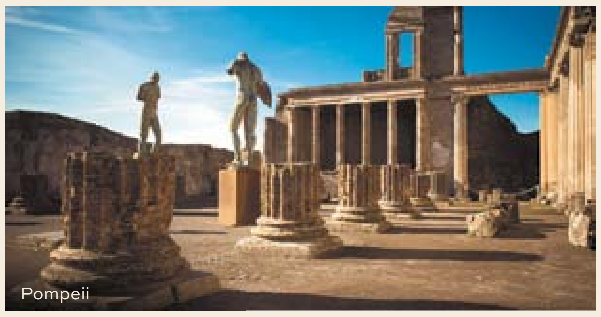

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# Praise for boy, 12, who drove to safety after mum collapsed

*Zac enjoys sitting on a patrol bike during visit to West Mercia Police's headquarters*

**A BOY of 12 who took the wheel when his mum suddenly collapsed while driving has been commended by police.**

**Quick-thinking Zac Howells steered Nicola Crump's car to safety on the A40 at 60mph.**

**Once the vehicle had stopped near Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire, he turned it off and called 999.**

**Zac was presented with a commendation by West Mercia Police Chief Constable Richard Cooper at the force's HQ this week.**

BY **ED CHATTERTON**

**He met the call-handlers and officers who responded to the incident on December 14, and was thrilled to get to sit on a patrol bike.**

**In audio footage of the call released by the force, Zac reassures his mum when she comes to, by saying: "I just drove the car. It's really easy."**

**He then adds: "It's fine, I'm worried about you, not me."**

**Nicola, 37, was driving them from home in Ebbw Vale, South Wales, to Birmingham's Christmas markets when the drama unfolded. She said: "I'm just so proud of Zac."**

*Nicola and hero Zac with Richard Cooper*

# Iran offers a month's pay to help stamp out protests

EXCLUSIVE

BY **RICHARD ASHMORE**

IRAN'S tyrant rulers are offering the equivalent of a month's pay to hard-up citizens who help to crush widespread anti-regime demonstrations.

It is feared that more than 12,000 protesters have been killed and thousands arrested since mass unrest erupted over the Islamic Republic's crashing economy and soaring prices.

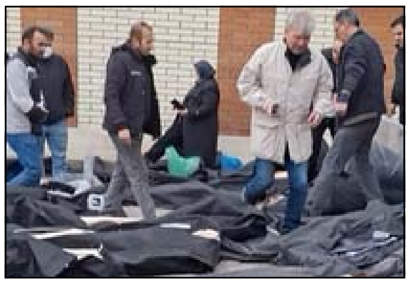
Supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has often used the brutal Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps to quash dissent. But latest protests rocked the leadership as farmers and shopkeepers, the backbone of the economy, took to the streets in anger.

Despite the regime blocking internet use, photos have emerged of distraught people searching courtyards full of body bags for missing relatives.

Donald Trump had indicated that US forces would strike the regime to stop the killings, but that threat appears to have been called off.

A source in Iran told the Express ruling mullahs had offered Iranians "8 million tomans", an average month's wages, if they helped security forces put down the protests.

Rezgar Rawshani, of the Kurdistan Free Life Party armed group which defends the Kurdish minority in Iran, said that sources there claim "the true number of victims is significantly higher than officially reported".



Families check body bags in Kahrizak, Iran

He continued: "The Islamic Republic of Iran has carried out an organised and widespread campaign of repression. Although street protests have temporarily diminished due to the scale of the bloodshed... this should not be interpreted as an end to public resistance."

The turmoil that saw Iran's currency plunge against the US dollar is a direct result of the country's war with Israel and the impact of US-led air strikes last summer.

Yesterday exiled crown prince Reza Pahlavi told a news conference in Washington DC that he would return to Iran to lead a new government, insisting that the "Islamic Republic will fall. Not if but when".

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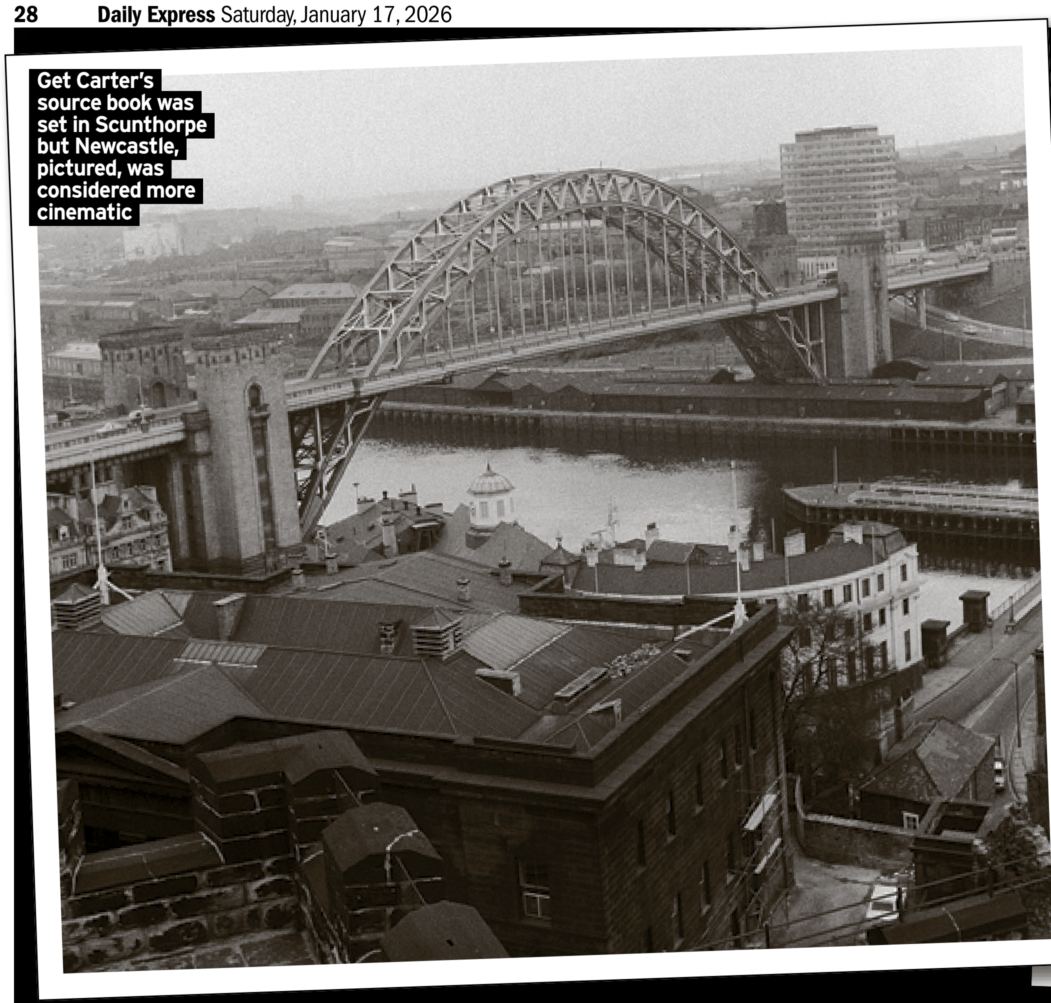

Get Carter's source book was set in Scunthorpe but Newcastle, pictured, was considered more cinematic

Caine takes a cigarette break during filming in July 1970

### Fifty-five years after its release, SPENCER VIGNES on one of the best British films ever made

# GOT CARTER!

## Critics hated Michael Caine's gritty gangster film but the public loved it

TODAY, it ranks as probably the best British gangster film ever made. And yet 55 years ago, when Michael Caine took the ruthless character of Jack Carter from the pages of a book and onto the big screen, nothing could have been further from the truth.

Savaged by the critics for its portrayal of excessive violence, Get Carter seemed destined to die the same kind of death as many of the characters featured in its 112-minute attack on the senses.

In reality, it was simply ahead of its time.

As Caine – no stranger to the mean streets of post-war, inner-city Britain – once said: "It was too realistic for those people who had become used to the choreographed nonsense you usually saw in those days."

All of which begs the question – how on earth, considering its bleak subject matter and high body count, did Get Carter ever get made in the first place?

On January 28, 1970, a package was delivered to the home of film director Mike Hodges containing a book accompanied by a brief note from the producer Michael Klinger. "Dear Mike, I did enjoy meeting you the other day," it read.

"I had a chat with Barry who felt you might be interested in reading a book with a view to directing and possibly writing the screenplay." "Barry" referred to Barry Krost, Hodges' agent at the time. The book was Jack's Return Home by Ted Lewis, the story of a London mob enforcer called Jack Carter who travels to the north of England to investigate the mysterious death of his brother – sparking unease among other criminal gangs in the area, who fear his snooping will interfere with their operations.

Hodges read the book and was enthralled. Murder, revenge, corruption, sleaze and betrayal set against a gritty, industrial backdrop.

Thirty-two weeks was all it took him to write the script, cast the actors, find a crew, choose the locations, film the scenes and edit the results into the finished article.

Along the way, Hodges and Klinger made two decisions that would be crucial to the film's eventual success. The first was to shoot it in and around Newcastle upon Tyne, completely unrecognisable then from the trendy party mecca it has become. The book had been set in Scunthorpe – equally gritty but without the cinematic locations.

Together, the two men made a tour of the area in Klinger's somewhat conspicuous white Cadillac, with Hodges adapting his screenplay to accommodate some of the locations they came across.

In effect, Newcastle became one of the film's co-stars – and not in an altogether positive way. Caine wrote in his autobiography What's It All About?: "By now I had seen poverty in different parts of the world that had made my own childhood look quite privileged, but I had never witnessed misery like this in my own country."

> **'I'd seen poverty in different parts of the world but never misery like this in my own country'**

The second was the casting of Caine himself. Raised in the tough Elephant and Castle area of south London, he was already a superstar, having appeared in films such as Zulu, Alfie and The Italian Job.

In hindsight, playing Jack Carter – less of an anti-hero and more a ruthless, unfeeling killing machine – could have been career suicide, but Caine didn't see it that way.

"One of the reasons I wanted to make that picture was my background," he admitted after its release. "In English movies, gangsters were either stupid or funny. I wanted to show that they're neither. Gangsters are not stupid, and they're certainly not very funny." Later, he went as far as to say that "Carter is the dead-end product of my own environment, my childhood. I know him well. He is the ghost of Michael Caine."

HODGES, who died in 2022, said 12 years ago: "He [Caine] was key in terms of us getting the film made.

"His name got us our [financial] backing and gave the character of Carter a certain allure, if you can call it that, which hadn't been there in the book.

"It didn't matter that he was so closely associated with London and we were filming in Newcastle. The character he played, and the way he played it, just drew you in."

To emphasise the cultural and geographical gap between swinging London and provincial Newcastle, Hodges chose to film the opening title sequences from the front of a train as it sped through the changing landscape between the two cities – the same train conveying Carter on his vengeful mission.

To accompany this, he wanted a piece of music with a sense of foreboding. Which is where the jazz pianist Roy Budd came in. "I

Michael Caine in iconic shot gave the sharply dressed enforcer Carter 'a certain allure'

Caine's on-screen killing machine has delighted generations of viewers

Hodges, left, with Caine, centre, at a party for film crew

shot the title sequence on the way to shoot the film in Newcastle," said Hodges. "The idea was to put the titles as the [railway] tunnels blacked out the screen.

"This sequence fulfilled another function in that it showed Jack Carter on his way up North having been warned against doing so by his gangster employers.

"When we showed this to Roy Budd he composed the very effective and exciting theme music to accompany the rhythm of the train. It subsequently became one of the United Kingdom's most played pieces of film music ever composed."

That particular piece of music, called Main Theme – Carter Takes a Train, had a sparse, menacing quality that stuck in the mind with all the subtlety of an ice pick. Which is exactly what Hodges wanted, paving the way as it did for the carnage to come.

On February 3, 1971, Get Carter went out into the world, receiving its premiere in Los Angeles prior to going on general release in the UK the following month.

"Like a bottle of neat gin swallowed before breakfast," was how the musician and critic George Melly described it in his review, and that was one of the kinder ones.

It wasn't that the critics necessarily hated the film, more that they objected to the levels of violence displayed particularly by Carter as he set about eliminating anyone suspected of playing a part in his brother's demise. However, Britain's cinema-goers felt differently and voted with their feet.

In March 1969, the notorious Kray twins, Ronnie and Reggie, heads of probably the most feared organised crime gang in the UK, had been found guilty after what was, at the time, the longest murder trial in British legal history. The fanfare surrounding both the case and their sentencing was enormous.

"This was the underworld presented as entertainment," wrote Nick Triplow in his biography of Ted Lewis, who completed the first draft of Jack's Return Home around the same time as the Krays were sentenced.

One newspaper reporter who attended the trial even compared the experience to "sitting right inside a superior thriller".

Just like Caine, large sections of the public were ready for a film that didn't portray gangsters as stupid or funny.

Released at a time when the rules surrounding film censorship had recently been relaxed – encouraging producers and directors to try their hands at darker material – Get Carter performed well, becoming the sixth most popular movie at the British box office in 1971.

SIGNIFICANTLY, it has continued to find audiences ever since, as new generations fall under the spell of Jack Carter as played by Michael Caine, stalking the avenues and alleyways of north-east England in a blue mohair suit while supping pints in thin glasses.

Not to mention the character's immortal lines, such as "You're a big man, but you're in bad shape. With me it's a full-time job. Now behave yourself."

Hodges recalled: "Looking back, I'm very proud of the way it turned out.

"It all came together remarkably quickly which isn't always a good thing when you're making something for cinema or television, but on this occasion it turned out to be just that. It's very of its time and yet it has stood the test of time.

"It's probably what I'm best known for, and I'm absolutely fine with that."

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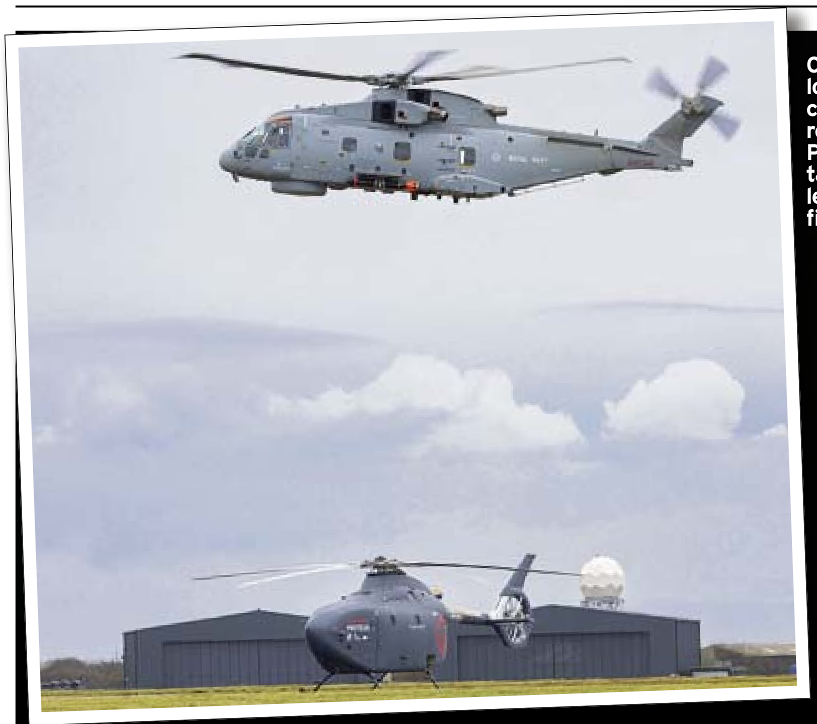


Officials look on in control room as Proteus takes off, left, for first flight

# Historic 'uncrewed' flight

**BRITAIN'S first autonomous full-size helicopter has completed its maiden flight,** *writes Dean Murray***.**

**Developed under a £60million programme, the Proteus Technology Demonstrator took off at Predannack Airfield, in Cornwall.**

**Manufactured in Yeovil, Somerset, the Proteus was designed and built by aerospace firm Leonardo for the Royal Navy. It is believed to be one of the world's first full-sized uncrewed helicopters. A Royal Navy spokesman said: "It will enable the UK to find, track and, if required, act against adversaries with unprecedented effectiveness across vast areas of ocean."**

**Luke Pollard, minister for defence readiness, said: "This maiden flight is a proud moment for British innovation. Proteus supports skilled UK jobs. Autonomous systems will be vital in protecting our seas."**

# Navy man sues MoD for £500k over jet's noise

BY **PAUL KEOGH**

A FORMER Royal Navy engineer who says his hearing was ruined as a fighter jet landed next to him on an aircraft carrier is suing for £500,000.

Harry Jefferson was aboard HMS Queen Elizabeth, refuelling a Merlin helicopter, when the supersonic F-35 stealth fighter landed in 2021.

Although he tried to turn his head, the 27-year-old was exposed to extreme noise and heat as the vertical-landing jet touched down.

He suffered permanent hearing damage, quit the Navy and is now suing the MoD for about £500,000 for the loss of his career.

Colleague Reece Colwell, 25, who was alongside him, claims a smaller sum as his career was not ended.

Their lawyer said the men should have been ordered to stay in a safe place as the Mach 1.6 (1,220mph) single-seat fighter landed.

The MoD accepted breach of duty, but is fighting the level of payouts at Central London county court.

At the time of the injury, the seamen were on board HMS Queen Elizabeth, one of the largest and most powerful warships ever built for Britain, capable of deploying up to 72 aircraft. One such plane is the US-made Lockheed Martin F-35 – the Lightning II – a jet that takes off via a short ramp, but lands vertically.

To touch down, it orientates its engine downward to hover, stabilised by a large fan behind the cockpit.

Court papers show Mr Jefferson, of Gosport, Hants, and Mr Colwell, of Taverham, Norfolk, wore ear defenders and foam ear plugs as they started to refuel a helicopter.

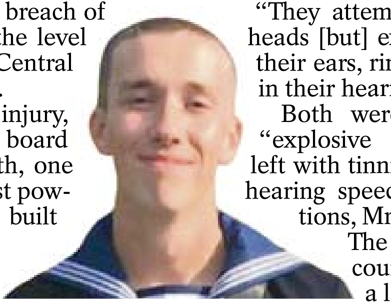
They were initially moved to a safe area due to the incoming F-35, only to be told to go back to their work.

Barrister Stuart McCracken, representing the pair said: "[The F-35's] exhaust was down... within metres of the claimants' position. It was extremely loud and hot.

"They attempted to turn their heads [but] experienced pain in their ears, ringing and a change in their hearing."

Both were diagnosed with "explosive ear trauma" and left with tinnitus and difficulties hearing speech in noisy conditions, Mr McCracken said.

The case will return to court for a full trial at a later date.



Harry Jefferson had to quit Navy

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Ashes glory with James Anderson and Alastair Cook in 2009

By **Jamie Roberts**

GRAEME Swann says he went on SAS Who Dares Wins to prove he is no quitter after a bitter end to his cricket career.

But the England great, 46, admits he found the Channel 4 challenge much tougher than he expected.

"It was way harder than I thought," he says. "I honestly thought because it's television, I thought it'd be a bit watered down for what you see and a bit dramatised. It really isn't. It is brutal.

"I think Ben Cohen at one point said to me, this is disgusting. And that is a great adjective. It was disgusting.

"Like there's some of those things you have to do and some of the cr*p you have to crawl through and swim through and put your body through.

"It was way harder than I thought. I've got so much respect for those guys, for the actual guys. It was mind-numbingly hard."

But he adds: "Well, actually, I loved it. One of the reasons I wanted to do it, I've got three kids and I wanted to show them that, hey, I'm not a quitter, that I'll never give in, unless it's for the good of everyone.

"And I wanted to test myself, to see if I was mentally strong enough, because I'm 46... this is probably as fit as I've been, but it is not an old man's game, special forces stuff."

Swann had already won three Ashes series with England when he travelled to Australia for the 2013/14 tour.

But England lost the series 5-0 and Swann was forced to retire due to injury after three tests.

It led to accusations he had let the side down – a charge he is still keen to put right 12 years later.

Explaining how he hit rock bottom at the time, Swann says: "It was an injury, unfortunately. They [the press] needed a scapegoat.

"I should never have gone on that tour. I had nerve damage in my elbow, and that was the end of my career. It wasn't that I didn't think I was good enough [as has been reported]. It's that I couldn't feel the ball in my hand.

"When you're bowling for England and you don't know where it's gonna go, that's not the ideal place.

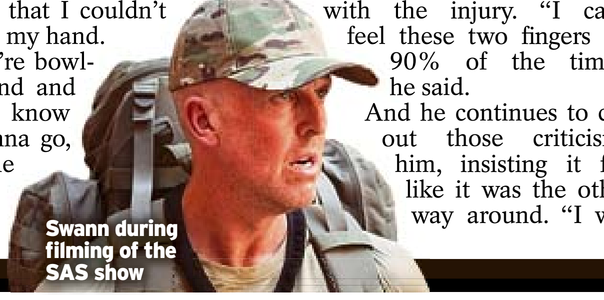
"And my hand has never recovered. So, unfortunately, I've had to just live with that. But yeah, it was a low moment."

He admits he still struggles with the injury. "I can't feel these two fingers for 90% of the time," he said.

And he continues to call out those criticising him, insisting it felt like it was the other way around. "I was

Ashes pain on ill-fated 2013 tour

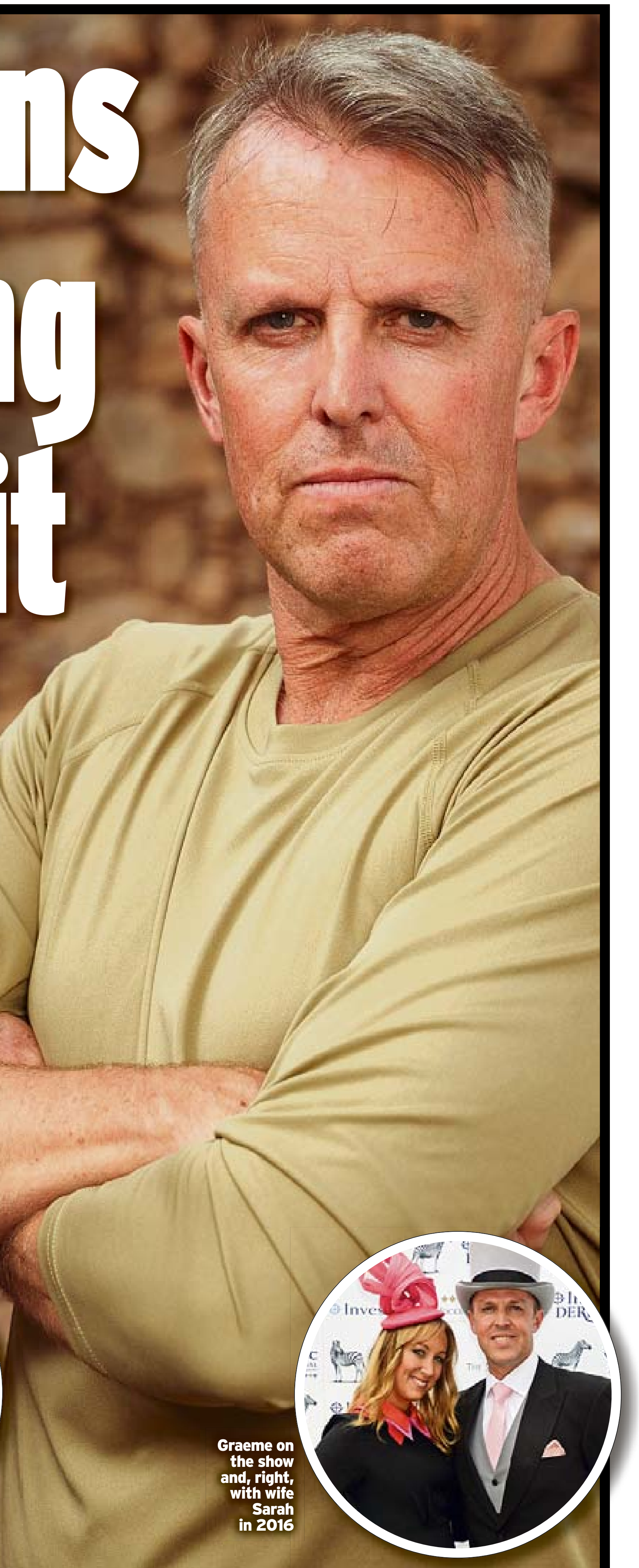
Graeme dances on Strictly with Oti Mabuse in 2018


Swann during filming of the SAS show

# Who Dares Wins was disgusting ...but I loved it

## Ashes hero Graeme Swann was shocked how tough the celebrity SAS show was but he wanted to prove that he is no quitter

Graeme fights ex Aussie cricket ace Brad Hodge on Celebrity Who Dares



Graeme on the show and, right, with wife Sarah in 2016

forced to retire and told to go home," he continues. "The amount of people who just sort of abandoned ship and showed no support whatsoever. It was shocking. It included my employers. The England and Wales Cricket Board was horrific.

"I was just cast adrift. I didn't hear from anyone for about two years. I mean it was in the days before anyone really took mental health seriously. I was depressed after that tour. No one ever checked in. I saw a team England doctor about two years later, and he said, oh, how are you, mate? Is everything all right?

"That was the first time anyone asked. It shows how far things are hopefully coming. Because back then, no, you just got absolutely cast adrift."

Swann, who has three children – Charlotte, Wilfred and Jessica – with wife Sarah, was born in Northamptonshire and made his first-class debut for Northamptonshire in 1998. Two years later, he made his England debut in a one-day international but it wasn't until 2008, while playing for Nottinghamshire, that he was selected for the Test side.

HE TOOK two wickets in his first over in Tests, including that of Indian great Rahul Dravid, and went on to claim 255 scalps in 60 matches – only six men have taken more for England.

Since retiring, he has become an advocate for better psychological support in cricket.

"The biggest advice I can give anyone is to learn to be resilient," he says.

"Society now doesn't teach resilience. It teaches everyone to be like, everyone's OK...

"I think it's good now that mental health is not seen as a stigma anymore, because everyone suffers from it at some point. But the very fact that I still get abused every now and again for supposedly abandoning the team shows the mental health issue is being absolutely poo-pooed by people who think they can say what they want."

● *Celebrity SAS: Who Dares Wins, stream or watch live on Sundays and Mondays at 9pm on Channel 4.*

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## What's your tipple?

by **Matt Nixson**

# Go Down Under for the wizard flavours of Oz

AUSTRALIA is one of the world's great producers and exporters of wine. Aussie winemakers have been at the forefront of breaking boundaries with new and inventive ways of doing things, from the screwcap (an Aussie invention) to wine boxes (ditto).

It's no wonder British consumers lap up wines from Down Under as they manage to combine great value with great fun. They tend to be fresh, fruit-driven and easy to drink, of consistent quality and labelled in an attractive and easy-to-understand way.

The main regions are in the cooler southern parts of the country but every state produces wine in a variety of styles with different grapes, taking advantage of the climate differences and soil types. The warmer regions produce full-bodied, richly flavoured and textured wines, while cooler climates generally make medium-bodied and spicier styles.

In recent years, winemakers have been innovating by picking grapes earlier and using less oak, resulting in lighter, fresher wines and showing true regional expression.

Reds are typically rich, medium to full-bodied and ruby-purple colours with ripe juicy fruit and peppercorn aromas, plus ripe tannins and spicy notes.

From whites, you can expect subtle flavours and aromas, and long, refreshing finishes.

## AUSSIE WINES TO HIT YOU FOR SIX

**1 Robert Oatley Signature Series Chardonnay 2023 (£15, 13%)**
A pitch-perfect chardonnay from the family-run producer in the cooler Margaret River region. Apples, peach and notes of citrus, oak and vanilla frame a dry, refreshing finish. Available from The Co-op, Majestic and Costco.

**2 Wirra Wirra Church Block 2022 (£16.50, 14.5%)**
This full-bodied blend of cabernet sauvignon, shiraz and merlot won't disappoint if you like rich reds. Cranberries, plums and blackcurrants jostle on the palate with notes of dark chocolate and hints of herb. Available from Ocado, Sainsbury's, Waitrose and Amazon.

**3 Grand Barossa Shiraz 2023 (£16.50, 15%)**
This top-notch Aussie red is full-bodied, bold and quite wonderful. Big flavours of dark red berries – majoring on blackberry, blackcurrant and plum – with subtle notes of cherry and redcurrant, with vanilla, leather and chocolate in the mix. Juicy with an off-dry finish. Available from Sainsbury's.

**4 Cherubino Cruel Mistress Pinot Noir 2024 (£17.66, 12.5%)**
This rich, medium-bodied red is a favourite. Big, fruity flavours of cherry, raspberry and strawberry usher in a long, smooth finish and earthy notes. A terrific red, there's nothing cruel at all about this wine! Available from Booths, Taurus Wines and Dalling & Co.

**5 The Oath Red Blend (£14, 13.9%)**
This big, punchy, full-bodied red blend delivers great bang for your buck. Rich red berry flavours and plenty of spice on the palate, and mouth-watering aromas on the nose. A dry, smooth finish with a welcome flick of acidity. Available from Majestic.

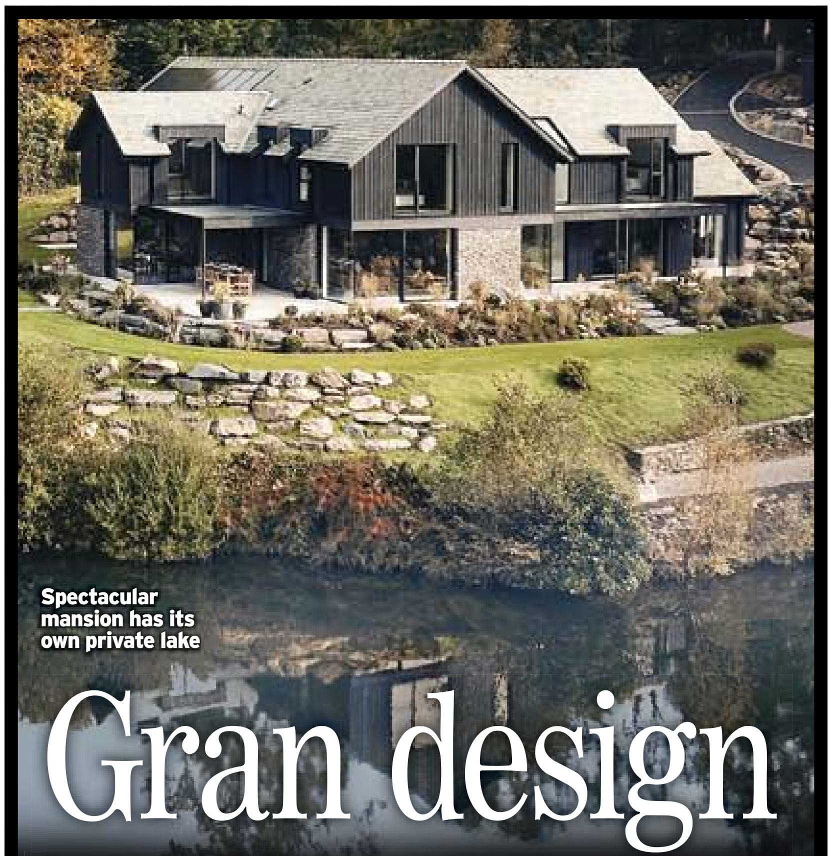
**6 The Society's Australian Chardonnay 2024 (£7.75, 13%)**
Crisp and dry, another great-value unoaked chardonnay that's filled with zinginess. Light and bright on the palate with a dry, acidic finish. Available from The Wine Society.

1
ROBERT OATLEY

4
Cruel Mistress

6
The Society's
AUSTRALIAN CHARDONNAY

**Share your own drink-related tips with matt.nixson@reachplc.com**



Spectacular mansion has its own private lake

# Gran design

## £4.5m home winner glad she snubbed hubby's tip

Nicola and Martyn Dickinson celebrate

BY **TOM BEVAN**

A GRANDMOTHER who ignored her spouse's suggestion to stop entering Omaze draws has won a £4.5million mansion and said: "This is precisely why I never listen to my husband."

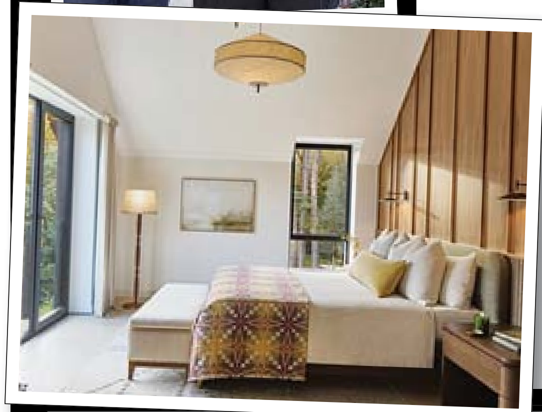
Nicola Dickinson, 59, became an instant multi-millionaire after winning the spectacular home in the Lake District that comes with its own private lake.

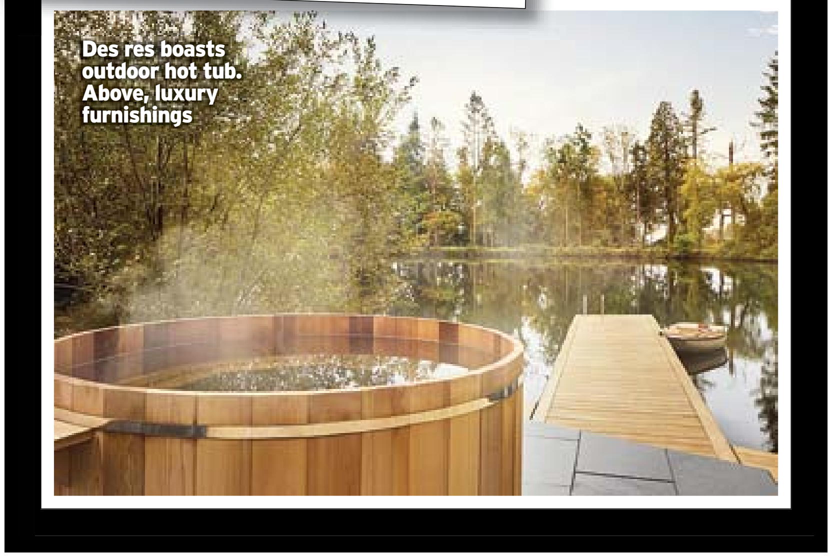
She bought her winning entry for just £25 as part of her Omaze subscription and was entering draws for four years.

Nicola revealed her husband of 38 years Martyn, 58, repeatedly told her she would "never win in a million years"– advice she's very glad she ignored.

Nicola, from Swindon, added: "Martyn has been moaning, but even if I didn't win, I was supporting charities."

● *For draw entries go to omaze.co.uk*





Des res boasts outdoor hot tub. Above, luxury furnishings

# Outer Hebrides is hols hotspot

BY **ELLIE CLIBBENS**

FORGET about Tenerife and the Costa del Sol, Brits' top holiday hotspots for this year include the Outer Hebrides and Faroe Islands.

Many are also planning to visit the Maltese island of Gozo, Latvia and Lapland (in the summer), a survey revealed.

The poll of 2,000 adults found 43% expect to visit somewhere that would not otherwise have occurred to them as a place to holiday, showing a growing appetite for more unusual destinations. This seems to be a stronger trend among the younger generations, as 67% of under-30s are specifically looking to go somewhere off the beaten track this year.

The list, compiled by savings app TopCashback, was topped by Sardinia, with Madeira second and shock contender the Outer Hebrides in third. Gozo, Latvia, the Faroe Islands and Lapland all made the top 10.

More than two-fifths are choosing a lesser-known location this year because they think it will lead to more memorable experiences.

Adam Bullock, from TopCashback, said: "For many, value is about the joy and memories they get – the kind of getaway that feels exciting and genuinely worth talking about when they return."

*Garry Beach, in the Outer Hebrides*

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# 30-SECOND CHALLENGE

**JUST follow the instructions from left to right, starting with the number given to reach an answer at the end of the row. Set your own 30-second challenge: for the very young or arithmetically rusty, you have 30 seconds for the BEGINNER task. For a greater challenge, try BEGINNER and INTERMEDIATE in 30 seconds. True mental gymnasts should try INTERMEDIATE and ADVANCED in 30 seconds together.**

Today's answers can be found on page 43

| | | | | | | | | | | YOUR ANSWERS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Beginner** | 64 | TAKE THE SQUARE ROOT | x9 | -16 | ÷8 | +59 | 6/11 OF THIS | +40 | ÷4 | |
| **Intermediate** | 13 | x4 | +184 | 3/4 OF THIS | -85 | INCREASE BY 25% | +251 | ÷6 | -18 | |
| **Advanced** | 182 | +354 | 3/4 OF THIS | -66 | 8/21 OF THIS | +215 | TAKE THE CUBE ROOT | x17 | -18 | |

## THE NATIONAL LOTTERY

FRIDAY, JANUARY 16
**EUROMILLIONS**
5 17 24 29 50 5 10

**THUNDERBALL**
3 7 27 28 29 12

THURSDAY, JANUARY 15
**SET FOR LIFE**
9 22 24 29 30 1

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 14
**LOTTERY**
2 5 22 35 44 54 23

**THUNDERBALL**
16 17 22 33 39 6

## THE HEALTH LOTTERY

FRIDAY, JANUARY 16
2 27 31 42 45 38

THURSDAY, JANUARY 15
6 9 24 30 46 50

The Health Lottery has raised more than £135m for health-related causes since 2011. Details at thehealthlotteryfoundation.org.uk

## PHONE POLL RESULTS

We asked in our poll on Thursday:
**Should 999 heroes injured in line of duty receive a medal?**

**YES: 97%**

**NO: 3%**

# SUDOKU

**Fill in all the squares so that each row, each column, and each 3x3 square contain all the digits from 1 to 9**

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | 5 | | | 4 | | | 7 | |
| | | 9 | 5 | | | 1 | 4 | |
| 1 | | | | 6 | 7 | | | 3 |
| | 3 | | | 2 | 8 | | 9 | |
| | 9 | 1 | | | | | 2 | |
| | 8 | | 6 | 1 | | | | 5 |
| 8 | | | 1 | | 4 | | | 7 |
| | 7 | | 8 | | 6 | 2 | 1 | |
| | 1 | | | 3 | | | 5 | 4 |

This is the Quick Sudoku for the solver in a hurry.
For today's solution call:
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(Calls cost 80p per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge)
For extra clues call:
**09013225602**
(Calls cost 75p plus your telephone company's network access charge)

**MORE PUZZLES – PAGES 42&43, PULLOUT**

**YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION**

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | 9 | 3 | 8 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 7 |
| 2 | 5 | 1 | 4 | 7 | 9 | 6 | 8 | 3 |
| 8 | 7 | 4 | 6 | 3 | 5 | 9 | 1 | 2 |
| 7 | 3 | 2 | 9 | 6 | 1 | 8 | 4 | 5 |
| 9 | 1 | 8 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 7 | 2 | 6 |
| 4 | 6 | 5 | 7 | 2 | 8 | 3 | 9 | 1 |
| 3 | 2 | 7 | 1 | 8 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 9 |
| 1 | 8 | 9 | 3 | 5 | 6 | 2 | 7 | 4 |
| 5 | 4 | 6 | 2 | 9 | 7 | 1 | 3 | 8 |

## DO YOU HAVE A STORY OR PHOTO?

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Mercedes 'Gullwing' is considered one of best sports cars built

# Dust settles on £4.4m speedster

BY **DEAN MURRAY**

EAT my dust! This time-capsule sports car, preserved for 70 years, could fetch £4.4m at auction.

The rare 1956 Mercedes-Benz 300 SL 'Gullwing' is considered the greatest speedster ever. It boasts original paintwork... and a light coating of dust.

It was bought new in 1956 by Claude Foussier – Europe's first Coca-Cola importer – who sold it in 1961 to a collector who kept it for over 50 years.

He preserved it "like a work of art" without the car even being cleaned.

Paris auctioneers Artcurial say the vehicle is "in an absolutely astonishing, 100% original condition, never restored, never disassembled, still in its original paint, and fitted with the complete set of sport options from the period catalog".

Artcurial adds: "It retains its natural leather interior...original accessories, its luggage set, tool kit, original licence plate, and even the dust that has protected it from the passage of time."

It goes under the hammer on January 27.

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# The Saturday briefing

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## YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

*Is there anything you're yearning to know? Send your questions, on any subject, to the contacts given below, and we will do our best to answer them...*

LEADING ROLES: Olivia Colman receiving her Oscar for The Favourite in 2019 and, below, Bette Davis

**Q Why are the US Academy Awards known as the Oscars?**

*Kevin P O'Connor, West Bromwich, West Mids*

**A** One of the most recognised trophies in the world, the Academy Order of Merit has been presented to thousands of film makers since the initial awards banquet in the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel in May, 1929.

Made from gold-plated bronze and standing 13.5 inches tall, the trophy is of a knight holding a crusader's sword, standing on a film reel. It was designed by MGM's art director Cedric Gibbons in 1928 and sculpted by Los Angeles artist George Stanley.

However the origins of "Oscar" as a nickname for the statuette are disputed. One story has it that upon seeing the trophy for the first time, Academy librarian (and eventual executive director) Margaret Herrick remarked that it resembled her Uncle Oscar.

While this is the most popular story and the one credited by the Academy, Herrick's account changed slightly in later years, with her admitting she never had an uncle called Oscar but would joke about a fictional Uncle Oscar.

The Academy didn't adopt the nickname officially until 1939 but it was widely known enough by 1934 that Hollywood columnist Sidney Skolsky – who also claimed to have coined the name – used it in reference to Katharine Hepburn's first Best Actress win.

Another claim for the "Oscar" name comes from actress Bette Davis who, upon winning an Academy Award in 1936, made the observation that the statuette's golden buttocks reminded her of her first husband Harman Oscar Nelson's backside. She later retracted the claim in a 1974 biography, reputedly telling her biographer "a sillier controversy never existed".

Bruce Davis, a former executive director of the Academy, credited Eleanore Lilleberg, a secretary at the Academy for the name when the award was first introduced. In her brother Einar's autobiography, Eleanore coined the name "Oscar" from a Norwegian army veteran who "stood straight and tall".

**Q Can you tell me how the @ symbol came into being? I've heard it predates computing.**

*Margaret Walker, Norwich*

**A** The @ character is the symbol of the internet age, crucial for emails and social networking. Called the "snail" by Italians, the "monkey tail" by the Dutch, in Turkish it means "rose", while in Greek it is "duckling" and "worm" in Hungarian.

The origin of the "at" sign is a bit of a mystery but it appeared long before it graced computer and typewriter keyboards. One theory is that it was created by medieval monks looking for shortcuts while copying manuscripts.

The earliest discovered reference to the symbol is a religious one, in a 1345 Bulgarian translation of a Greek chronicle. Held in the Vatican Apostolic Library, a sign that looks like an @ is used in place of the A in the word Amen.

The Italian historian Giorgio Stabile has traced the @ sign back to the 16th century, where it was used commercially to mean "at the rate of". Found in a 1536 letter sent by a Florentine merchant, it denoted a unit of weight and volume of wine, based on the capacity of "amphora" – long-necked pottery storage jars that had been used since ancient times.

The @ sign continued to be used as an invoice abbreviation and it made its way on to typewriter keyboards in the late 19th century as a tool for business use.

In 1971, computer scientist Raymond Tomlinson used the symbol to separate the user's name from the destination address to send an email message between two computers. Tomlinson chose @ because it was then rarely used in computing, so wouldn't confuse early programs or operating systems. In 2010, the Museum of Modern Art in New York added the @ symbol to its design collection.

**Q Now Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor has lost his royal titles, is he still in the line of succession?**

*R Rhead, Stoke-on-Trent*

**A** Despite being stripped of his royal titles (Duke of York and HRH address) by King Charles late last year, Andrew has not lost his place in the line to the throne and is eighth behind Prince Harry and his children, Archie and Lilibet.

Although he is now essentially a private citizen, only an act of parliament, plus consent from the Commonwealth, can remove him from the line of succession.

**PLEASE SEND US YOUR INTRIGUING QUESTIONS ON ANY SUBJECT:**

- **By email:** put "questions" in the subject line and send to caroline.ford@reachplc.com
- **By post:** to Any Questions, Daily Express, One Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5AP
- **Unfortunately we cannot reply individually, but we will feature the best questions on this page.**

forgotten verse

*Abigail Charles, from Basildon, Essex, remembers reading a beautiful love poem at school but can only recall the first couple of lines. She would love to know the rest of the words again.*

### SHE WALKS IN BEAUTY

**Lord Byron (1788-1824)**

She walks in beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies;
And all that's best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes;
Thus mellowed to that tender light
Which heaven to gaudy day denies.

One shade the more, one ray the less,
Had half impaired the nameless grace
Which waves in every raven tress,
Or softly lightens o'er her face;
Where thoughts serenely sweet express,
How pure, how dear their dwelling-place.

And on that cheek, and o'er that brow,
So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,
The smiles that win, the tints that glow,
But tell of days in goodness spent,
A mind at peace with all below,
A heart whose love is innocent!

**If you can't remember the words to a favourite verse or song from yesteryear, send us a snippet and we'll do our best to find all the wonderful words.**

## BEACHCOMBER 109 YEARS OLD AND STILL CONQUERING...

**INVASION of one sovereign state by another with the main purpose of effecting regime change is against international law and it is high time the United Nations did something about it. Almost a thousand years have passed since the forces of William the Conqueror killed King Harold II at the Battle of Hastings and William is the 25-times-greatgrandfather of Charles III and the UN is only now beginning to wonder what to do about it.**

**There are, of course, excuses for the delay. The League of Nations was founded in 1920 and only replaced by the United Nations in 1946, which explains 900 years of the delay. Also, there are now around a billion people on Earth who are direct descendants of William the Conqueror and it would be quite a struggle ensuring that anyone with claims to the British throne is not one of them. But that is no reason to refrain from even making some effort to do so.**

**Before 1066, William I was Duke of Normandy, a title he acceded to as the eldest son of Robert I of Normandy and his concubine Herleva. The illegitimacy of his birth gave him some problems in being accepted, including his generally being known as William the Bastard. One might even conjecture that this was part of the reason for his invasion.**

**There has also been some confusion about the Battle of Hastings as this was fought around the nearby town of Battle. One might reasonably conjecture it became known as the Battle of Hastings as "Battle of Battle" sounds silly.**

**Part of William's defence against accusation of illegal invasion was his claim he was a distant cousin of Edward the Confessor, who had died childless, and he had been nominated as successor by Edward himself. However there were others, including King Harold, who made similar claims and Edward the Confessor never confessed before he died who he really wanted to succeed him.**

**There is also the evidence of the "Bayeux Tapestry", which was probably not made in Bayeux and is not a tapestry but an embroidery. There is considerable doubt about the claim, first made in the 12th century, that King Harold is the man in the embroidery with an arrow in his eye. Whether this is enough to exonerate William from a charge of illegitimate Conquering, however, can only be decided in court.**

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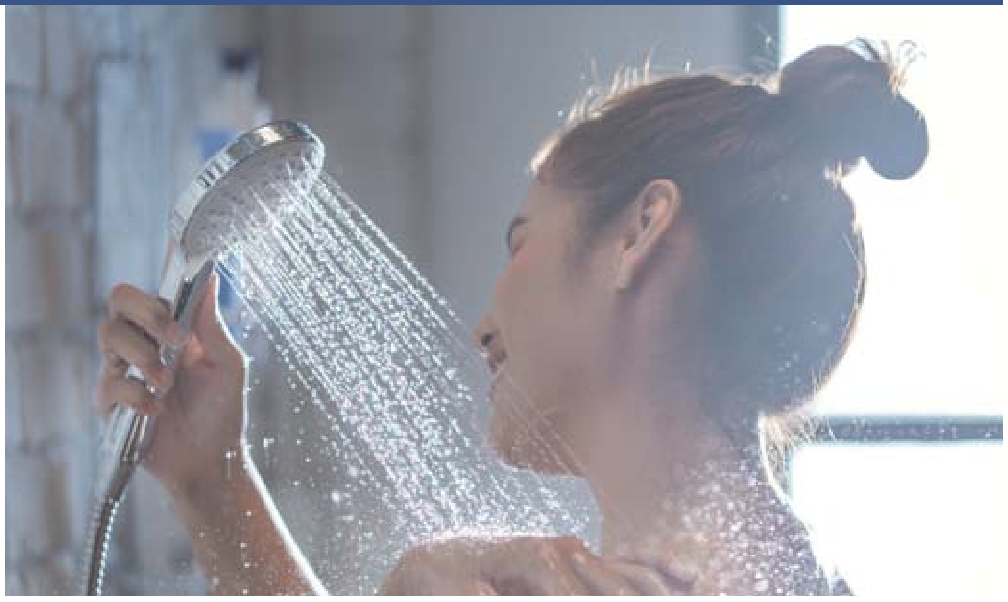

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# Welsh hero worn down by tragedy

Yorath said he never fully recovered from the death of his 15-year-old son

## Terry Yorath

### Footballer and manager

**BORN MARCH 27, 1950 – DIED JANUARY 7, 2026, AGED 75.**

WELSH footballer Terry Yorath picked up the first of 59 international caps in 1970 and remained a regular in the side for a decade, captaining his country 42 times. He then went on to manage Wales during a highly successful five-year period from 1988 to 1993.

Meanwhile at club level, Yorath played for Leeds United, Coventry City, Tottenham Hotspur, Vancouver Whitecaps, Bradford City and Swansea City.

As a player, Yorath was best known as a challenging defender and midfielder for Leeds United, whom he joined in 1967, after being scouted by Don Revie as a 15-year-old. He played in 28 matches during their famous 1973-74 championship-winning season and the following year in all eight of Leeds' European Cup games.

He left Leeds in 1976, having made 198 appearances and moved to Coventry City for three years, playing 99 games and scoring three goals before transferring to Tottenham Hotspur.

In 1981, he moved to Vancouver Whitecaps in the North American Soccer League and was captain for two seasons before returning to the UK. His next role was as a player-coach at Bradford City, but during Bradford's final game of the 1985 season, fire broke out in the main stand, killing 56 spectators.

Yorath helped a number of people to escape before making his own exit by breaking a window in the players' lounge and jumping through it, injuring his leg.

He also managed Swansea City, Cardiff City, Sheffield Wednesday and Lebanon's national team.

Born Terence Charles Yorath in Cardiff, he played rugby union as scrum-half at school but switched to football, appearing for Wales Schools as a defender.

He married Christine Kay in Leeds in 1971 and the couple had two sons and two daughters, including television presenter Gabby Logan, who was presenting Match Of The Day Live when she heard her father was dying and had to be replaced on air.

Yorath's eldest son, Daniel, died aged 15 from a heart condition after playing football with his dad in their back garden in 1992.

The subsequent family turmoil eventually contributed to the breakup of his 1971 marriage to Christine, a successful property developer, in 2007. In 2004, Yorath was convicted of drink-driving after he hit and seriously injured a pedestrian and was banned for 30 months. He received a community rehabilitation order, helping disabled children to ride horses.

Yorath died after a short illness and is survived by Gabby, Louise and Jordan and five grandchildren.

## Bob Weir

### Musician

**BORN OCTOBER 16, 1947 – DIED JANUARY 10, 2026, AGED 78.**

**THE American musician and songwriter was a founding member of the Grateful Dead.**

**After they disbanded in 1995, he performed with the Other Ones, later known as the Dead, with other former members of the group.**

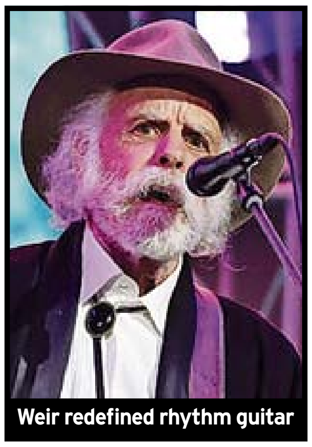
**Born in San Francisco, he was given up for adoption. At 13 he began playing the guitar after less success with the piano and trumpet.**

**Undiagnosed dyslexia meant school was difficult for him and he was expelled.**

**Aged 16, wandering around Palo Alto, a city in California, with a friend, he stumbled across a 21-year-old Jerry Garcia and they spent the night playing music together, deciding to form a band.**

**Originally called Mother McCree's Uptown Jug Champions, they later became The Warlocks and eventually the Grateful Dead.**

**"The Beatles were why we turned from a jug band into a rock 'n' roll band", said Weir.**



Weir redefined rhythm guitar

**He played rhythm guitar, wrote many of their songs and sang a large portion of the lead vocals through their 30-year career. The band had only one Top 40 hit single, Touch of Grey, in 1981 but their devoted live audience made them hugely successful touring artists.**

**Shortly before Garcia's death in 1995, Weir formed RatDog, performing covers of The Beatles, Bob Dylan, Chuck Berry and Grateful Dead songs.**

**He remained unmarried although lived for several years with Frankie Hart, a go-go dancer in New York.**

**Weir co-wrote a children's book called Panther Dream: A Story of the African Rainforest, with his sister Wendy, who illustrated it. Proceeds went to African reforestation programs.**

**Last year Weir was diagnosed with cancer.**

**He died from underlying lung issues.**

## Colin McDonald

### Goalkeeper

**BORN OCTOBER 15, 1930 – DEATH REPORTED JANUARY 5, 2026, AGED 95.**

**AS England's oldest surviving international footballer, Colin McDonald truly excelled during the 1958 World Cup, when his goalkeeping skills ensured that hot favourites Brazil were held to a goalless draw.**

**Asked about the famous game he said: "To stop those gifted players from scoring was a very special day for me."**

**Born Colin Agnew McDonald in Bury, Lancashire, he won eight caps for England, including four World Cup games but his brilliance in goal was cut short when he broke his leg in two places, putting an end to his playing career.**

**McDonald played more than 200 times for Burnley and remained in the game, working as a scout at Bury Football Club.**

**He is survived by his wife Anne and their four children.**

# Iconic EastEnder who met Krays

## Derek Martin

### Actor

**BORN APRIL 11, 1933 – DIED JANUARY 10, 2026, AGED 92.**

EASTENDERS actor Derek Martin's life off-screen was just as colourful as the roles he took during a 50 year career.

The actor, best known as cabbie Charlie Slater in the BBC soap, once carried guns for the Kray twins and stood trial at the Old Bailey on a theft charge.

Born Derek Rapp in Bow, east London, to Bill, a docker, and Christina, who worked in a laundry, Derek was a proper East Ender. Home was a two-up, two-down with an outside loo and tin bath.

Before acting, young Derek worked as a professional gambler, bouncer, meat-market porter, debt collector. He also raced motors.

He drank in the infamous Blind Beggar pub in Whitechapel where he met Charlie Kray, who asked him to smuggle a couple of guns out in his trousers.

"I didn't ask questions – well, you just didn't. I just did as I was told," he said of the incident.

His showbusiness career began as a stuntman on Doctor Who, but after breaking his collarbone he switched to acting. He changed his name from Rapp to Martin after Dean Martin.

Martin charmed as Charlie Slater

Martin's agent, Sharon Henry, said: "For more than 50 years, Derek was a truly authentic working-class voice in British television and film."

Despite having no professional training, he found an agent in a Soho cafe and went on to appear in Z Cars, The Sweeney, Law & Order, Eldorado, Hart To Hart, Only Fools And Horses and The Bill, before landing the role of Charlie Slater.

He first appeared in 2000, along with his four daughters Lynne, Kat, Little Mo and Zoe, remaining until his character suffered a fatal heart attack in 2016.

His film credits included Secrets Of A Windmill Girl (1966), The Sex Thief (1973), Spaghetti House (1982) and Boston Kickout (1995).

Married twice, first to Christine Rigg in 1961 and then to Gloria Mitchell in 1971; both marriages ended in divorce. He had twin sons, David and Jonathan with Gloria.

Away from work he was an avid golfer and a member of the Water Rats charity. His autobiography, An East End Life: My Story, was published in 2010.

Martin died after a short illness.

**Written by KAREN ROCKETT**

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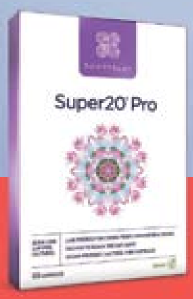

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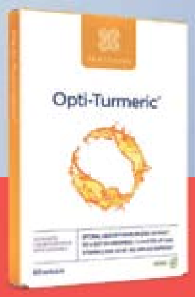

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# Puzzled?

## PROBLEMS TO TEST YOUR BRAIN POWER

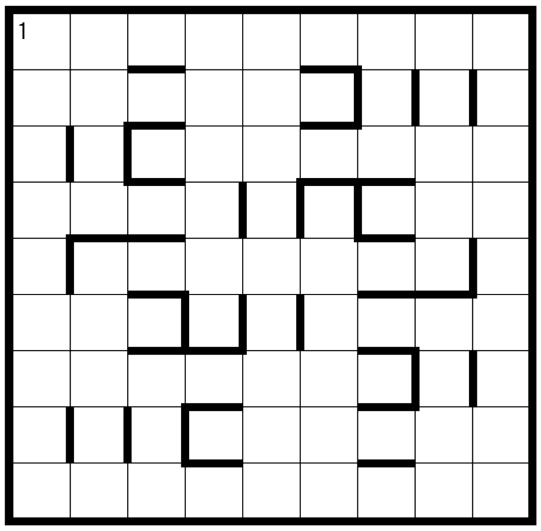
## MAKE YOU VERY CROSSWORD

**ACROSS**

**1** Toady (9)
Expert fighter pilot (3)
_ Rendell, author (4)
Devout woman (3)
Capital of Norway (4)
Pair (6)
Signal (7)
Tooth covering (6)
Steel hand tool (7)
Argue fads (anag.) (9)
Before the present (7)

**DOWN**

**1** Large glasses for sherry (9)
Doorsill (9)
Football umpire (abbr.) (3)
Disagree with (6)
Toy (9)
Agency (6)
Daughter of a sibling (5)
Row (4)
Aggressive youths (4)
Tropical fruit (5)
_ Widdecombe, former MP (3)



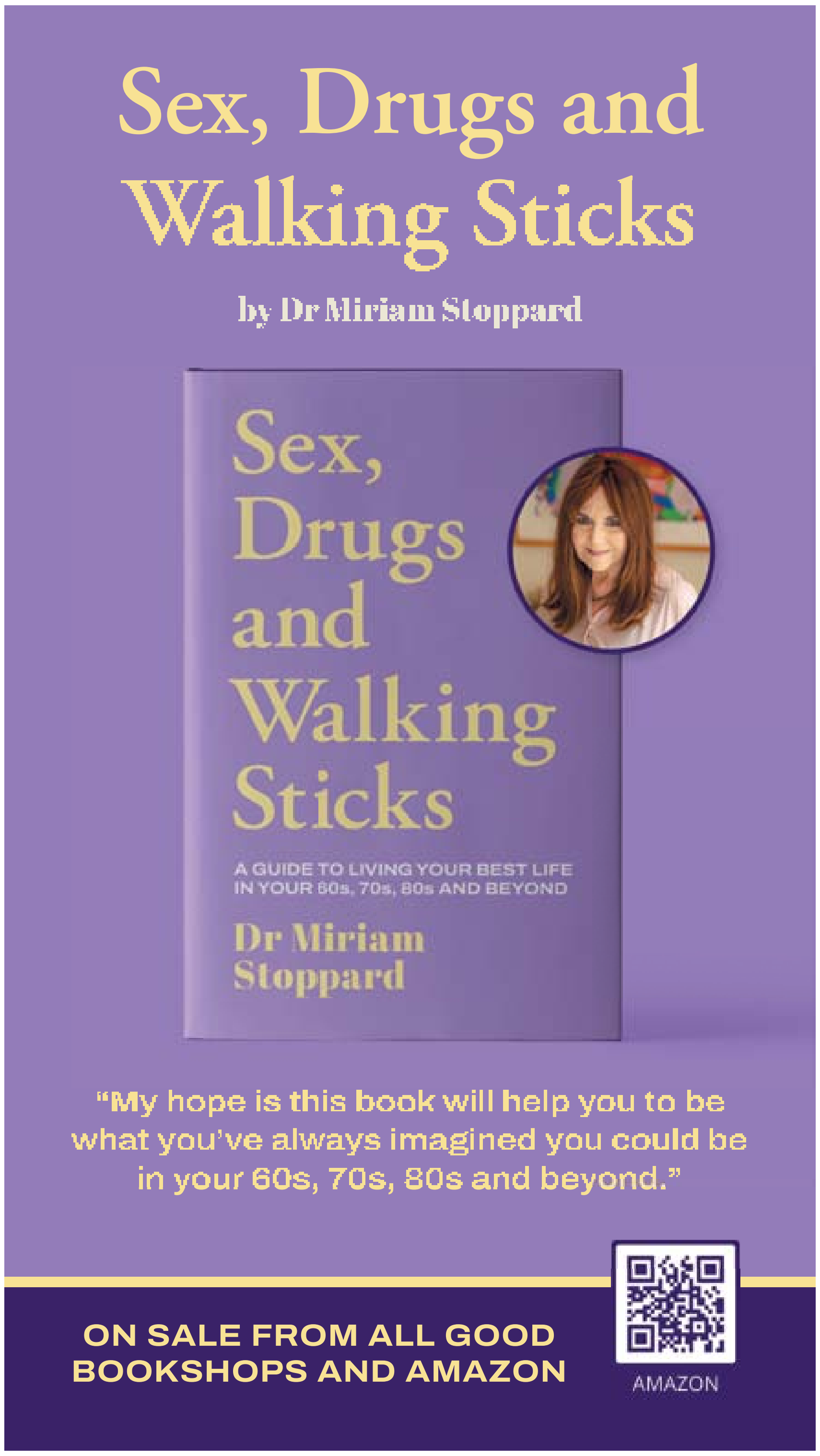
For today's solution call:
**0907 181 2581**

**Calls cost 80p per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge.*

**LAST SATURDAY'S SOLUTION**

**ACROSS** Distances, Insist, Octopus, Teak, Cap, Colonel, Ale, Grin, Captain, Jungle, Sheltered.
**DOWN** Distracts, Ince, Tickle, Astronaut, Cup, Equal, Suspended, Engine, Clash, Idle, Poe.

**SP: Spoke – Helpline 0333 202 3390*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by Dr Miriam Stoppard

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## ALPHAPUZZLE™

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ■ | 26 | 1 | 17 | 20 | 2 | ■ | 25 | 3 | 7 | 24 | 13 | ■ |
| 4 | ■ | ■ | 20 | ■ | 3 | ■ | 17 | ■ | 19 | ■ | ■ | 15 |
| 24 | ■ | 17 | 20 | 17 | 18 | 17 | 5 | 23 | 24 | 13 | ■ | 1 |
| 18 | 1 | 5 | 16 | ■ | ■ | 14 | ■ | ■ | 10 | 24 | 5 | 23 |
| 13 | ■ | 23 | ■ | 17 | 11 | 24 | 12 | 23 | ■ | 11 | ■ | 3 |
| 17 | 19 | 13 | ■ | 20 | ■ | 6 | ■ | 13 | ■ | 1 | 13 | 12 |
| ■ | ■ | 3 | 10 | 20 | 5 | ■ | 15 | 3 | 19 | 20 | ■ | ■ |
| 19 | 20 | 20 | ■ | 24 | ■ | 20 | ■ | 1 | ■ | 17 | 5 | 14 |
| 11 | ■ | 3 | ■ | 16 | 24 | 17 | 5 | 23 | ■ | 13 | ■ | 19 |
| 20 | 24 | 11 | 5 | ■ | ■ | 8 | ■ | ■ | 8 | 20 | 17 | 12 |
| 3 | ■ | 16 | 24 | 5 | 23 | 24 | 13 | 9 | 17 | 16 | ■ | 8 |
| 3 | ■ | ■ | 20 | ■ | 3 | ■ | 24 | ■ | 22 | ■ | ■ | 25 |
| ■ | 21 | 19 | 15 | 15 | 16 | ■ | 9 | 1 | 24 | 23 | 5 | ■ |

A B ~~C~~ D E F G H I J K ~~L~~ M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | C | | | | | |
| **14** | **15** | **16** | **17** | **18** | **19** | **20** | **21** | **22** | **23** | **24** | **25** | **26** |
| | | | | | | L | | | | | | |

**Alphapuzzle**® tests logic and word power. Each grid number represents a letter. Every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter or letters – below the main grid – to start. **Solution next Saturday.**

**Difficulty:** 7/10 **Target:** 24 mins

**Clue:** Refined chap's a go-between.

THINKING SPACE

For up to six Extra Letter clues:
**0907 181 2567***
(deduct two minutes for each clue letter heard)

Today's full solution: **0907 181 2566***

*Calls cost 80p per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge.

Alternatively, for six extra letter clues direct to your mobile, text **DSXALPHA** to **64343.** Texts cost £1 plus your standard network rate.

**LAST SATURDAY'S SOLUTION**

**ACROSS** Anchors, Save, Jeer, Frequent, Usable, Peeped, Attend, Creche, Crowning, Milk, Flex (clue), Treacle.
**DOWN** Caress, Turtle, Scar, Beeswax, Toffee, Dainty, Asleep, Cygnet, Squeeze, Mace, Avenue, Halved.

*Alphapuzzle® ©2025 Acorn Editorial Ltd. All words appear in Chambers Dictionary.*

**CAN YOU TACKLE THE EXTRA TOUGH ULTRA ALPHAPUZZLE® IN THE SUNDAY EXPRESS EVERY WEEK?**

## PENTALETTA

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| R | | A |
| | F | |
| E | | L |

Can you find 17 or more words containing only the five letters shown on the left? Each word must include the letter in the centre, in this case F, and must contain at least four letters, but there is no limit on the number of times you can use a letter in any word. Your list should include an eight-letter word that's a recommendation.

**Average mark:** 17 words • **Good:** 22 words
**Excellent:** 26 words • **Incredible:** 29 words

**LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:** ellipse, ellipses, ellipsis, epee, espies, lipless, lips, lisp, lisps, peel, peels, peep, peeps, pelisse, peps, pies, pile, pilei, piles, pill, pills, pipe, pipes, pips, plies, seep, seeps, sepsis, sips, sleep, sleeps, slip, slips, spell, spells, spiel, spiels, spies, spill, spills. **The clued word was: SLEEPLESS**

## SUDOKU

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 4 | | | 3 | | | 6 |
| | 3 | | 6 | | 5 | | | 7 |
| | 7 | | | 4 | | 3 | | |
| 7 | | | 4 | | | | | 2 |
| | 1 | 5 | 7 | | 9 | 8 | 3 | |
| 6 | | | | | 2 | | | 1 |
| | | 2 | | 1 | | | 6 | |
| 1 | | | 8 | | 6 | | 9 | |
| | | 9 | 5 | | | 1 | | |

Fill the grid so that every column, row, and 3x3 square includes all the digits from 1 to 9.
**Level:** Moderate
**Target:** 24 mins

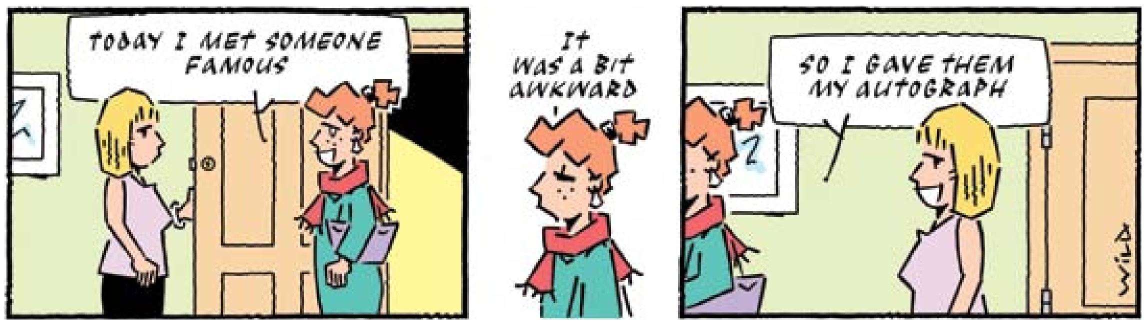
LAST SATURDAY'S SOLUTION

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9 | 8 | 7 | 5 | 1 | 6 | 3 | 4 | 2 |
| 4 | 2 | 1 | 9 | 8 | 3 | 6 | 5 | 7 |
| 5 | 3 | 6 | 4 | 7 | 2 | 8 | 1 | 9 |
| 1 | 6 | 5 | 2 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 3 | 4 |
| 7 | 9 | 8 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 6 | 5 |
| 2 | 4 | 3 | 6 | 5 | 7 | 9 | 8 | 1 |
| 6 | 7 | 9 | 8 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 3 | 5 | 2 | 7 | 6 | 1 | 4 | 9 | 8 |
| 8 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 9 | 5 | 7 | 6 |

For extra clues call:
**0901 322 5603**
**Calls cost 75p plus your telephone company's network access charge.*

For today's full solution
**call: 0907 181 2575**
**Calls cost 80p per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge.*

## FAITH, HOPE AND SUE Lisa Wild


TODAY I MET SOMEONE FAMOUS
IT WAS A BIT AWKWARD
SO I GAVE THEM MY AUTOGRAPH
WILD

## RUPERT AND THE PENGUINS No 14

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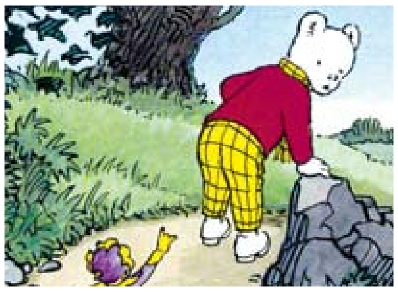
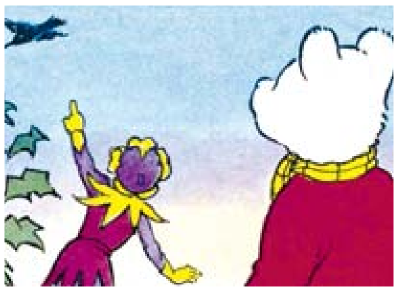


*Behind him, a shrill voice is heard, "Wait, little bear! D'vou see that bird?"*

**Rupert walks away from the Imps, trying hard to think of someone else who would be willing to help. Suddenly the Imps laughter stops and one of them calls, "Wait!" Rupert turns to see the caller pointing to a bird which is flying overhead. "Why not try him?" chuckles the Imp. "He's not a king. But he's a kingfisher!" And the Imps laugh at their joke. But Rupert is still staring at the beautiful bird. "Thank you," he murmurs to himself.**

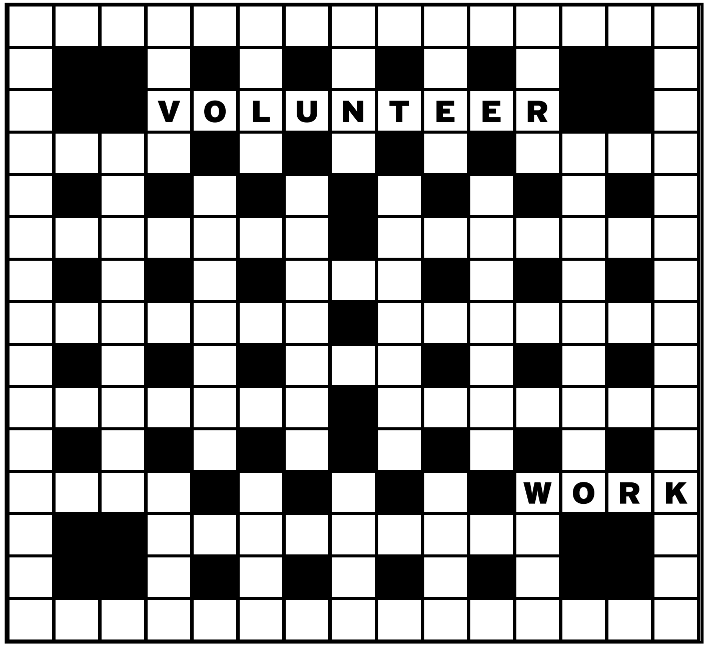


*"There flies a king who never reigns! A KINGFISHER!" the Imp explains.*

# THE SUNSHINE PUZZLE

The Sunshine Puzzle has been a firm favourite with readers of the Express for many years. All you need to do is find the correct home for the listed words. We have helped you by placing two. Here are the words that go into the grid:

**ERA**
**LEI**
**AULD**
**AVER**
**CASE**
**CERT**
**GAPE**
**HOSE**
**LOVE**
**NUTS**
**RANK**
**SERF**
**TOGA**
**TORT**
**WEAN**
**WORK**
**CLUEING**
**MAGENTA**
**MOONLIT**
**NIRVANA**
**OIL WELL**
**PEAT BOG**
**RAPPORT**
**REPRINT**
**SPARING**
**STELLAR**
**EXONERATE**
**OBBLIGATO**
**SPOTLIGHT**
**VOLUNTEER**
**NON COMPOS MENTIS**
**NUCLEAR REACTORS**
**SELF-CENTREDNESS**
**STRAIGHTJACKETS**



For today's solution call: **0907 181 2584**

**Calls cost 80p per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge.*

**LAST SATURDAY'S SOLUTION**

**ACROSS** Bicycle, Flapped, Thorn, Existence, Languages, Since, Separates, Stunt, Field, Cardboard, Skies, Apologise, Imitation, Sheds, Singers, Samples. **DOWN** Battles, Clown, Conquer, Energetic, Fails, Artists, Peninsula, Deepest, Precision, Surrounds, Fossils, Disease, Blossom, Dresses, Acids, Ideal.

# THE DAILY EXPRESS 30-SECOND CHALLENGE

**TODAY'S ANSWERS:** BEGINNER = 19; INTERMEDIATE = 43; ADVANCED = 101.

# CRUSADER CROSSWORD

**WIN £100**

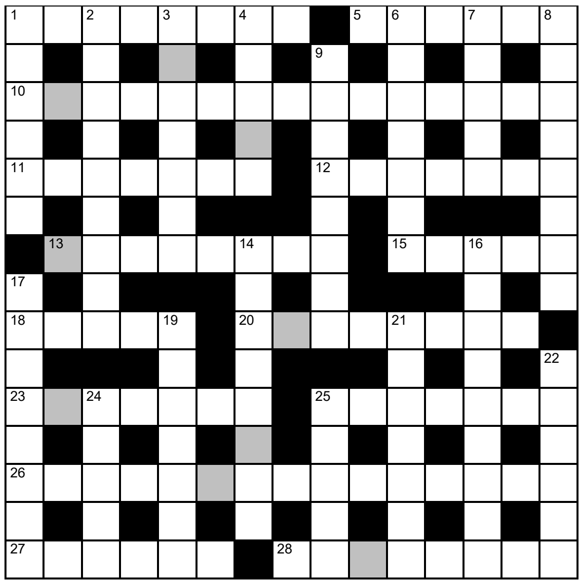
**FOR YOUR CHANCE TO WIN £100 CASH** read down the letters in the highlighted squares to reveal the mystery word

**ACROSS**

**1** Publication – one about man becoming conjuror (8)
**5** Real upstart interrupting performance by a lake (6)
**10** Hot person is keen to change and remain calm (4,4,5,2)
**11** Tooth specialist tends it badly (7)
**12** Merciful man with it gets hold of directions (7)
**13** Animal heard by fellow with rings originally travelling without shoes and socks (8)
**15** Trendy dog will suffer (5)
**18** Some popular eastern regions (5)
**20** Cheating when playing the violin? (8)
**23** Doubter, infected, embracing first of children (7)
**25** Writers I have found to be thoughtful (7)
**26** Her nasty pet bird ruined annual gift (8,7)
**27** Lie, say, somehow without difficulty (6)
**28** Chapter about woman getting to royal person owed money (8)

**DOWN**

**1** Manage to get brand before party (4,2)
**2** Plum joke included by inexperienced European (9)
**3** Selection containing chef's first frozen treat (4-3)
**4** Turn away from raver, terrified (5)
**6** Conservative greeting worker on island with wine (7)
**7** A French match, free (5)
**8** Ache revealed before part of academic year lasting for ages (4-4)
**9** One criticised about nothing being cut off (8)
**14** Bureaucrat, bad one, linked with Channel Islands man (8)
**16** Self-assured criminal initially not fined, surprisingly (9)
**17** Clear of obstacles, it's satisfactory (8)
**19** Celt has misplaced bag (7)
**21** Source of oil unusual in Leeds (7)
**22** Communication from character (6)
**24** Noblemen left among listeners (5)
**25** Rag used by father, quiet, with hesitation (5)



**TO ENTER:** Call **0904 161 3700** (calls cost £1.50 plus your telephone company's network access charge) and leave your answer and details, or text **DXCRUS** followed by a space, your answer, name and address details to **88833** (texts cost £1.50 plus your standard network rate). Lines close at midnight tonight. Or send your grid containing the answer in the shaded squares by posting it to: Crusader Crossword, January 17, PO Box 8694, Derby DE1 9TW. Entries must be postmarked by January 19 at the latest. For any postal enquiries, call helpline number. An extra day is given for postal entries during bank holidays. SP: Spoke – 0333 202 3390.

● ***One weekly winner will be the first random correct entry drawn from all entry routes after the closing date of midnight tonight. Competition runs Sunday to Saturday. The Editor's decision is final.***

**NEED HELP?** Call **0904 161 1609** for 5 extra clues! Calls cost £1.50 plus your telephone company's network access charge.

NAME

ADDRESS

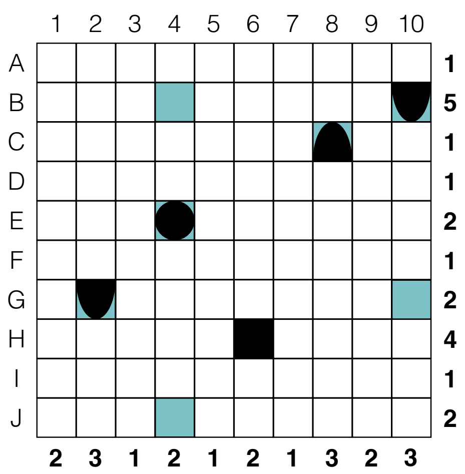
POSTCODE

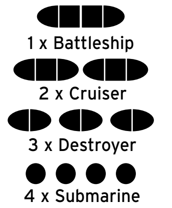
**Weekly Crusader Crossword Winner**
**28 December-3 January:** P K Bradley, Leeds;
**Please allow 30 days for prizes to arrive**

**LAST SATURDAY'S SOLUTION**

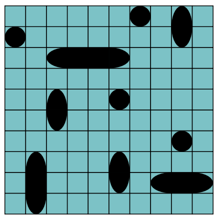
**ACROSS** 1 Manicure, 5 Mohair, 10 Lower one's sights, 11 Deplore, 12 Against, 13 Spaniard, 15 Ideal, 18 Parka, 20 Portrait, 23 Cashier, 25 Comment, 26 Marie Antoinette, 27 Nobody, 28 Interest. **DOWN** 1 Malady, 2 Newspaper, 3 Cartoon, 4 Range, 6 Origami, 7 Ashen, 8 Resettle, 9 Islander, 14 Apparent, 16 Epicentre, 17 Specimen, 19 Aniseed, 21 Romance, 22 Street, 24 Shrub, 25 Clown. **Prizeword:** Marionette.

# BATTLESHIPS





**LAST SATURDAY'S SOLUTION**



FIND where the fleet of ships shown is hidden in the grid. The numbers to the right of and below the grid indicate how many of the squares in that row are filled in with ships or parts of ships. The ships do not touch each other, even diagonally. Some squares have been filled in to start you off.

# TARGET

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Y | N | A |
| L | G | N |
| F | I | W |

**HOW many words of four letters or more can you make from the letters shown here?** In making a word, each letter may be used once only. Each must contain the centre letter and there must be at least one nine-letter word. No plurals. Verb forms ending in "s" permitted.

**TODAY'S TARGET**
**Good** 14; **very good** 21; **excellent** 28 (or more). **Solution next Saturday.**

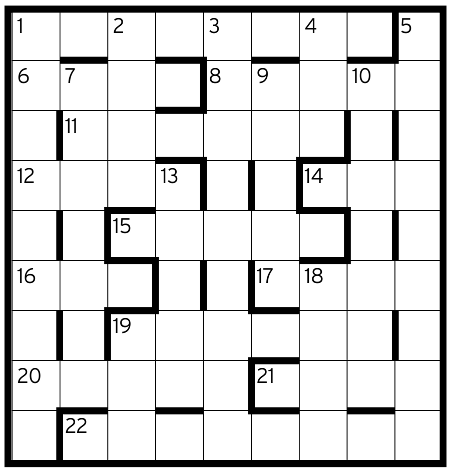
**LAST SATURDAY'S SOLUTION**

agin, align, anil, fain, fang, faring, fazing, final, flan, flaring, fling, **FRAZZLING**, gain, garni, grain, gran, grin, infra, lain, lang, lazing, ling, linga, naif, nail, rain, rang, rani, razing, ring, zing

Call **0907 181 2586** for today's Target solution

**Calls cost 80p per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge. All puzzles use The Chambers Dictionary*

# SMALL CROSSWORD



**ACROSS**

**1** Amiable (8)
**6** Sticks or shafts (4)
**8** League (5)
**11** Eyed furtively (6)
**12** Equipment (4)
**14** Honey-making insect (3)
**15** Writers of verse (5)
**16** Chew and swallow (3)
**17** Sailing vessel (4)
**19** Source (6)
**20** Ridicule (5)
**21** Exhort (4)
**22** Search for gold (8)

**DOWN**

**1** Men's graft (anag.) (9)
**2** Concept (4)
**3** Crèches (9)
**4** Jar cover (3)
**5** Translate (9)
**7** Perform surgery (7)
**9** Birds' homes (5)
**10** Gap (7)
**13** Bellows (5)
**18** Rent (4)
**19** Rowing implement (3)

For today's solution call: **0907 181 2583**

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**LAST SATURDAY'S SOLUTION**

**ACROSS** 1 Historic, 6 Oily, 8 Peace, 11 Modern, 12 Pats, 14 Elf, 15 Toast, 16 Tim, 17 Ever, 19 Raises, 20 Learn, 21 Cite, 22 Smuggler. **DOWN** 1 Hospitals, 2 Slot, 3 Operating, 4 Ian, 5 Performer, 7 Imagine, 9 Erase, 10 Coldest, 13 Solar, 18 Veil, 19 Ram.

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To add to the fiendish fun, Alphabeater is 'rotationally symmetrical'. In other words the grid is the same if you turn the page upside down. So, for example if there is a six-letter word Across which starts in the top left corner, there will be a corresponding six-letter word Across which ends in the bottom right corner square. Every black square has a symmetrical 'twin' but the 'twin' may not always share the same number. This can help identify other black squares. Of course if the centre square is black it has no corresponding 'twin'. Solution next Saturday.

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **A**<br>~~**B**~~ | 34 | 3 | 31 | 18 | 36 | 29 | 39 | 34 | 4 | 19 | 15 | 36 | 9 |
| **C**<br>**D** | 37 | 40 | 27 | 7 | 18 | 17 | 20 | 25 | 28 | 18 | 36 | 12 | 36 |
| **E**<br>**F** | 30 | 25 | 32 | 32 | 36 | 3 | 14 | 15 | 19 | 4 | 28 | 7 | 31 |
| **G**<br>~~**H**~~ | 21 | 38 | 13 | 19 | 5 | 39 | 37 | 9 | 40 | 14 | 29 | 21 | 9 |
| **I**<br>**J** | 2 | 25 | 33 | 27 | 24 | 36 | 15 | 36 | 10 | 28 | 32 | 31 | 3 |
| **K**<br>**L** | 25 | 21 | 25 | 37 | 6 | 4 | 13 | 21 | 8 | 1 | 7 | 6 | 28 |
| **M**<br>**N** | 5 | 8 | 33 | 28 | 16 | 13 | 33 | 13 | 22 | 36 | 22 | 39 | 27 |
| **O**<br>**P** | 9 | 4 | 37 | 30 | 40 | 12 | 34 | 7 | 8 | 39 | 15 | 38 | 11 |
| **Q**<br>**R** | 36 | 29 | 5 | 36 | 33 | 13 | 22 | 33 | 19 | 1 | 28 | 3 | 35 |
| **S**<br>**T** | 33 | 17 | 3 | 17 | 14 | 29 | 24 | 40 | 11 | 24 | 10 | 6 | 8 |
| **U**<br>**V** | 36 | 38 | 28 | 7 | 8 | 23 | 6 | 27 | 28 | 10 | 13 | 29 | 9 |
| ~~**W**~~<br>**X** | 29 | 40 | 23 | 13 | 16 | 36 | 5 | 4 | 26 | 17 | 22 | 12 | 24 |
| **Y**<br>**Z** | 32 | 31 | 32 | 12 | 14 | 3 | 38 | 26 | 36 | 27 | 11 | 35 | 3 |

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| W | | | | | | | | | | H | | | | | | | | | |

| 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 32 | 33 | 34 | 35 | 36 | 37 | 38 | 39 | 40 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | ■ | | | | | | | | | | B | | | | ■ | | |

**Target Time: 40 minutes**

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Extra letter clues
**0907 181 2559**
Today's full solution
**0907 181 2557**
Extra letter clues
**0907 181 2559**

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*Calls cost 80p per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge.

Alternatively, for six Extra Letter clues direct to your mobile, text **DSXBEAT** to **64343.** Texts cost £1 plus your standard network rate.

**LAST SATURDAY'S SOLUTION Black squares:** 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 16, 17, 20, 24, 26, 32, 33, 34, 35. **Across:** Weeping, Willow, Foisted, Judged, Mineral, Fact, Rajah, Elks, Unfixed, Vexing, Antique, Firmly, Grizzly. **Down:** Fibula, Vicuna, Confetti, Poked, Asexual, Exotica, Debit, Internal, Kingly, Delays.

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# TRAVEL GARDENING & FOOD

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**GRAB A PISA THE ACTION** *On a trip to Tuscany. See P48*

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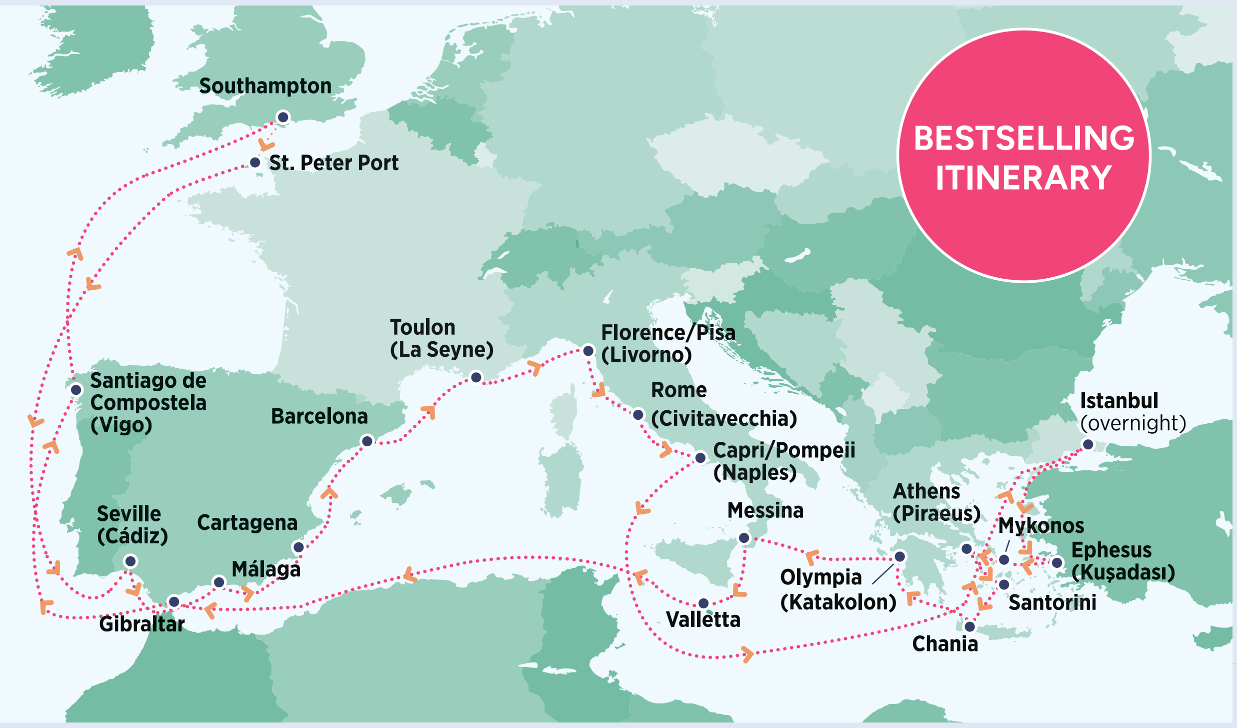
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**TRAVEL** EXPAND YOUR HORIZONS

*Edited by* **JULIE DELAHAYE**

**ANIMAL MAGNETISM** *Adult moose in Kiruna, Sweden*

# Turn up, tune in, chill out in Sweden

*Modern life wearing you out? MILO BOYD has the perfect solution with our laid-back Nordic friends*

Most countries choose excitement, beaches and action when selling themselves. "It's More Fun in the Philippines". "Epic Estonia". "I wish I was in Finland". All classics, all straight to the point. However, one country has gone for a slightly different tactic. "Welcome to Sweden, when the time is right" goes its official slogan, sort-of-but-not-really urging visitors to come. Now, the Nordic country is leaning even further into the idea that thrills aren't everything.

"In Sweden, boredom isn't a problem – it's the point. Introducing a travel concept that embraces an idea increasingly gaining ground: that boredom is good for you," the Visit Sweden tourist board announced recently. According to the tourist board, boredom is essential. Some scientists have found that humans are increasingly struggling to process the amount and complexity of data that today's world holds.

Boredom, research shows, helps the brain rest and recover, and enables deeper thinking and self-reflection. "You need to be bored," said Harvard professor Arthur C. Brooks in an interview last year.

The idea of slowing down once in a while is one that Astrid Lindgren, the beloved Swedish author of Pippi Longstocking, was writing about way back in 1964. "And then you also need some time to just sit and gaze," she said.

Susanne Andersson, CEO of Visit Sweden, explains the theory a little more.

"There are plenty of things to do in Sweden. But one of the best might be to come here, embrace the silence, and just be bored."

I didn't need a tourist board to tempt me to Sweden with promises of boredom. I married a Swede, meaning I've spent months in the mild-mannered country. And I can confirm that it does calm and contemplative better than any other place I've visited. And that's a great thing. Life in the UK is certainly a little too fast sometimes, and retreating to the steady refuge of Sweden is a great way to break out of it and restart.

The Swedish word for this philosophy is "lagom", which means "just the right amount", or "not too much and not too little".

And that word is central to one of the Swedes' most beloved and well-practised traditions, "fika". Fika is in plainest terms a coffee break, elevated with the addition of some cinnamon buns. But it's also a moment to down tools, to pause for a while, and to chat to others.

There's no playing on your phone over fika, nor stuffing in a meal deal before getting back to work. The quantity and approach must be lagom. Another well-practised and relevant weekly ritual is Fredagsmys, a cherished tradition of relaxing at home with family and friends on a Friday night. The lights are dimmed, the candles are lit, a big bowl of crisps is prepared and the TV is turned on.

Of course, Swedes like to party as much as the next self-respecting Nordic nation, but they also love to lock themselves away from the darkness of the winter night and put on an episode of Midsomer Murders. When not being cosy, the Swedes do, of course, love to be in the great outdoors. They seem to take great pride in having a well-treated raincoat, sturdy boots and waterproof trousers.

**WELCOME A-BORED** *Milo in a rowboat*

**NATURAL HIGH** *One of Sweden's 100,000-or-so lakes*

**BREAK IT UP** *Fika in Stockholm*

**ON THE HUNT** *Foraging in nature*

"There's no such thing as bad weather, only clothes," is a phrase that regularly rings out through the homes of Sweden. Maybe you think investing in high-quality outdoor wear is boring, but Swedes certainly don't.

Once properly wrapped up, heading out on a calm Sunday stroll is a regular family activity. A popular day out in the spring is "kosläpp", or the cow release, a traditional event where dairy cows are let out to pasture for the first time after a long winter spent indoors. Each year, it attracts great crowds. The televised stream of the annual moose migration to their northern summer pasture is also a huge event. In 2024, nine million people tuned in to the SVT feed to be in with the chance of spotting the grand animal wandering through a forest. For those who lack patience, a daily highlights package is available.

Sweden has around 100,000 lakes and they form a huge part of the culture. I don't class this as boring, but bobbing around on a lake when the sun is shining, watching the sun rise or set, is the kind of mind-cleansing activity Visit Sweden is promoting. If that doesn't quite do it, then partaking in a spot of blueberry or mushroom picking certainly will.

Even if that's all a bit exciting for you, then head to Sweden in the spring. At the first sight of warm sunshine, Swedes stop what they're doing and stand like sunflowers, soaking up the rays until another cloud forms.

> ***"One of the best things to do might be to embrace the silence, and just be bored"***

***More info: visitsweden.com***

# I'm house-sitting pretty right around the world

**PILGRIMAGE** *Finishing spot on the Camino de Santiago*

*By* **MILO BOYD**

A pensioner who lives on just £300 a month has spent the past 20 years travelling the world and living out of a suitcase. Tiera St Claire, 69, has no permanent home and instead supports herself through house and pet-sitting across the UK, Europe and the US. Since divorcing in 2005 after 18 years of marriage, she has adopted a nomadic lifestyle centred on freedom rather than security.

After her divorce, Tiera walked the Camino de Santiago, a 500-mile pilgrimage across northern Spain, a journey she has now completed 15 times.

**FREEDOM** *Tiera*

**NEW DIRECTION** *Camino de Santiago*

Soon after, a friend in Hawaii asked her to pet sit, marking the beginning of her new lifestyle.

"I just kept going. I've pet sat in Hawaii, New York and Florida and I have recurring sits in London, Madrid and other parts of Spain. I live out of a bag," she explained.

Tiera, who is from the US, survives on a £300 monthly pension and has no savings, but avoids rent by house-sitting. Her only regular expenses are food and her phone bill. Friends also allow her to store belongings around the world.

"The best bit of living my life this way is the freedom," she says. "What I've had to give up is security. That's the choice I make all the time.

"I have a lot of energy, so I walk, explore and write travel journals. I teach occasionally," she says. "I've surrendered to trusting that the money will come in. When I try to control everything, I just get stressed."

Despite travelling solo, Tiera generally feels safe. "I'm grounded and strong inside myself," she says. "I stay aware of my surroundings and work hard on staying physically strong."

She fell head over heels again in 2009, but that relationship didn't last.

"I fell in love again – and had my heart broken – in 2009 in Arizona. A friend laughed and said, 'most people go through this when they're teenagers!' I'm treasuring being free and not having someone want to control me, or change me, or make me think the way they do. A lot of the things that come with being in a relationship.

"What I do miss is affection, but pet sitting gives me this and fills the gap. When I have a cat I can pet, it helps. They love you unconditionally."

The pet-sitting veteran has cared for a wide range of animals, from cats and guinea pigs to rats and snakes. "I like the snakes," she adds.

Many of her stays are organised through HouseSitMatch. Founder Lamia Walker says house sitting is booming among older people.

"Retirees can struggle to afford a getaway these days with the cost-of-living crisis eating into funds, so house-sitting makes an affordable alternative, allowing them to explore fun new locations while staying in a comfortable home," Lamia says. "House-sitters can even save money on their own energy bills while they enjoy a holiday, as all the property's utility bills are usually paid by the owner."

**PRAISE YOU** *Santiago de Compostela Cathedral*

Travellers should note that some countries consider house and pet sitting to be work and may require appropriate visas.

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**AFFORDABLE** *Tuscany*

# Get away for less off the beaten track

*Looking for a great deal that won't bust your wallet this year? AMY JONES has the lowdown on where's best to take a holiday if you're on a budget in 2026*

**WHITE COAST** *Alicante*

**RIVIERA** *Antalya*

As we start a new year, many of us will turn our attention to our next getaway. Happily, finding some sunshine doesn't have to come with a hefty price tag. There are many excellent European destinations offering an affordable escape, whether you're looking for a sun-soaked beach getaway or a city break to explore the history.

In January, several major airlines are running sales, while hotel booking websites also offer discounted rates. Additionally, the first month of the year is the prime time to scoop up discounted holiday packages, helping you book that dream getaway for less.

In addition to the online deals, which are definitely worth checking out, it's helpful to know which destinations are most affordable once you've arrived.

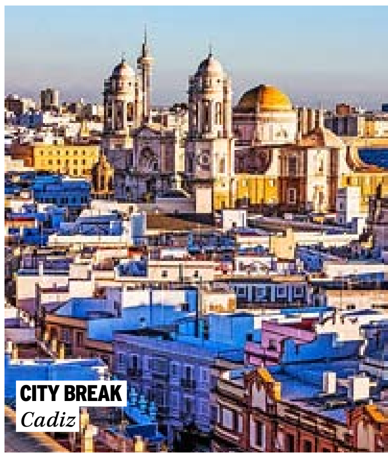
To help spread your costs even further for your 2026 trip, we've outlined 10 of the cheapest European destinations that are well worth a visit.

> *'A day of eating and drinking in Wroclaw will cost only £20'*

## BUDVA, MONTENEGRO

Bordering the Adriatic Sea and neighbour to Croatia and Albania, is Montenegro, an under-visited European gem. Its seaside resort of Budva is one of the most popular areas, boasting stretches of golden sand beaches and crystal-clear turquoise waters, while offering a vibrant nightlife and historic Old Town.

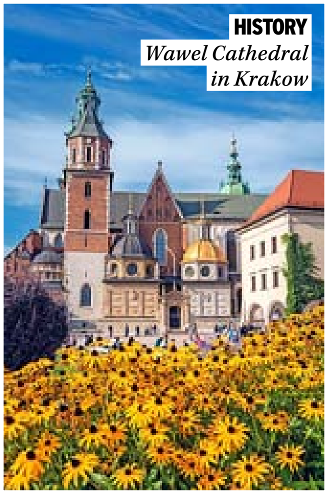
Montenegro is generally much more affordable than Western European countries and the more touristy hotspot of Croatia. Consumer champion Which? found that local beers like Niksicko and Pivo will set you back around £2-£3, while an hour's bus journey can



**CITY BREAK** *Cadiz*

**POPULAR** *Budva*

**SIGHTS** *Our Lady Of Mount Carmel Church, Valletta*



**HISTORY** *Wawel Cathedral in Krakow*

cost around £5-£8. Visitors have often praised the cuisine, with some meals costing as little as £10. While peak time is expected to be more expensive, there are plenty of budget-friendly accommodation options.

Flights to Montenegro start from £37.

**ISLAND LIFE** *Wrocław Old Town*

### WROCŁAW, POLAND

Poland is often considered one of the most affordable destinations in Europe, and the city of Wrocław is no exception. Nestled on the Oder River in western Poland, Wrocław is famed for its bustling Market Square, lined with elegant Renaissance townhouses and the fairy-tale Gothic Old Town Hall. The city is known as the "Venice of Poland", due to its 12 islands connected by more than 100 bridges, and it's the perfect place to wander and marvel at its unique allure.

There are plenty of restaurants for alfresco dining and bars for a traditional beer or vodka. Which? found that a day of eating and drinking in this enchanting city wouldn't cost more than £20, while a stay at a five-star hotel could cost £100.

Flights to Wrocław start from £29.

### TUSCANY, ITALY

Tuscany, renowned for its undulating landscapes, Renaissance masterpieces, and cities such as Florence, Siena, and Pisa, has been ranked as an affordable holiday destination in the heart of Italy. A week's stay in this stunning Italian region would set you back £929pp per week, inclusive of flights and accommodation, while the same stay in the Italian region of Sardinia could set you back around £1,508pp, according to Which?

Tuscany is touted as more budget-friendly due to its broad spectrum of lodging options, ranging from self-catering to bed and breakfast, room-only, all-inclusive and full-board packages. Flights to Florence start from £42.

### VILNIUS, LITHUANIA

An often-overlooked destination is the capital of Lithuania, Vilnius, known for its medieval Unesco-listed Old Town and fairy-tale Gothic and Renaissance architecture. It has often been dubbed "Vienna meets Paris" or the "Jerusalem of the North" and is one of Europe's greenest cities, boasting numerous parks.

Its prices are just as appealing as its undeniable charm, with travellers sharing that around £43 (€50) is a reasonable budget for a day exploring, including food, accommodation and transport.

Flights to Vilnius start from £30.

**CHARMING** *Vilnius*

### ALICANTE, SPAIN

With its pristine white-sand beaches and expansive resorts, Costa Blanca, along Spain's Mediterranean coastline, is one of the most budget-friendly holiday options. Known as the White Coast, it's home to popular resorts like Benidorm.

One of its more overlooked hotspots is the vibrant port city of Alicante, known for its charming Old Town (Barrio de Santa Cruz) and gorgeous waterfront (Esplanada de Espanya). The price of a beer can vary from £2 to £3.50 in some places, while a meal can cost between £6 and £9.

Flights to Alicante start from £27.

### CADIZ, SPAIN

Spain is a popular holiday destination for Brits searching for some summer rays, yet there's one place that has often been overlooked and is one of the most affordable areas along the Spanish Mediterranean.

Cadiz, situated at Spain's southernmost tip, is one of the country's warmest spots where temperatures seldom dip below 10C, even in winter. This coastal city is steeped in history, boasting an array of stunning landmarks to discover, including the Castle of Santa Catalina and the Torre Tavira, which offer panoramic views over the city.

Just last year, it was ranked as the cheapest city break in Spain, with a hotel room costing around £103 per night on average. A bottle of wine was found to set you back just £3.63, while a draught beer was around £2.48.

Flights to Jerez (XRY) start from £69.

### ANTALYA, TURKEY

Located along the turquoise western Mediterranean coastline is the city of Antalya, also known as the "Turkish Riviera". It offers golden sand beaches with crystal-clear waters, along with a range of beach resorts that cater to its laid-back appeal. It also boasts ancient ruins, the majestic Taurus Mountains and huge waterparks. It's considered a budget-friendly option for that balmy getaway with flights starting from £40.

### VALLETTA, MALTA

It may be the smallest and southernmost capital city in Europe, but Valletta is one of the most captivating and warmest. Known locally as "Il-Belt", this fortified city is a Unesco World Heritage Site, boasting charming cobbled streets, magnificent baroque palaces, serene gardens, and historic churches to explore.

With an impressive annual average of 2,957 hours of sunshine, Malta's capital is often referred to as the "sunny city", and it offers some reasonable prices. Malta's traditional savoury pastries, called Pastizzi, can cost just 90p, while a wrap can start from around £4.

Flights to Luqa Malta International (MLA) start from £34.

### KRAKOW, POLAND

Often regarded as the most affordable destination for a European city break, a list wouldn't be complete without mentioning Krakow in Poland. The medieval city has quaint cobbled streets, a gorgeous Old Town, which is a Unesco World Heritage Site, and boasts Europe's largest market square (Rynek Główny). Notably, its prices match its desirable appeal with a four-star hotel starting from as little as £57, meals for less than £10, and sandwiches for £2.50 with the bonus of adding a cold beer for less than £1.

Flights to Krakow start from just £26.

**PEACEFUL** *Unspoiled Cyprus coast*

### KARPAS PENINSULA, CYPRUS

**Also known as the Karpass, this thinly populated area of Cyprus is home to stunning deserted beaches and natural splendour in the Dipkarpaz National Park. Karpas Peninsula is considered one of the Mediterranean's most unspoiled regions, extending 80km to the island's northernmost tip, making it an ideal choice for those seeking a tranquil getaway. It's considered an affordable destination with a selection of low-price accommodation. Flights to Larnaca start from £62.**

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**BIG DROP** *Ffordd Pen Llech*

# RISE IN TOURISTS FOR TOWN THAT'S A SHEER DELIGHT

By **AMY JONES**

**A small seaside town is home to one of the world's steepest streets, which is so challenging that vehicles are banned from parts of it.**

**Harlech, on the edge of Snowdonia (Eryri) National Park, is home to the curious landmark that has garnered worldwide attention.**

**At the top of the town sits Ffordd Pen Llech, a street with a gradient of 28.6%.**

**Head to the bottom and you'll find a warning sign of a 40% slope, which reads, "Unsuitable for motors".**

**It was previously awarded a Guinness World Record in 2019 for being the steepest street in the world, but after being challenged and measured again, Baldwin Street in Dunedin, New Zealand, took the title in 2020 with a 34.8% gradient.**

**Despite this, the town still proudly displays its record sign, with tourists flocking to take a picture next to it.**

**STEEPED IN HISTORY** *Harlech Castle*

**Resident Myfanwy Jones, who has lived on Ffordd Pen Llech for more than 40 years says: "The sign at the top of the street went up a few years ago, but then the people from Dunedin in New Zealand came over to measure it for themselves, and the title went back to them. Now, it's probably the steepest street in the northern hemisphere.**

**"The sign itself seems to attract people to the street. Before it went up, it wasn't particularly well-known.**

**"Living here definitely keeps me fit. I sometimes walk up and down the street to the shop a few times a day. It's popular with marathon runners and I can see why – bikers like to ride down it as well.**

**"The scenery is obviously stunning – I wouldn't live anywhere else."**

**THRILL-SEEKER**
*Norwegian Luna*

# Meet the all-new masters of the sea

**ZEN AHOY**
*Mein Schiff Flow, TUI Cruises*

**SMALL CITY**
*MSC World Asia*

**DECEMBER DEBUT**
*MSC World Asia deck*

*Book a trip aboard the latest cruise ship launches and they won't disappoint, says* JULIE DELAHAYE

**EPIC**
*Legend of the Seas holds 5,628 people*

If you're tempted to take to the seas on a cruise this year, then you'll be spoiled for choice as a number of cruise lines prepare to add new ships to their fleets. Royal Caribbean, MSC Cruises and TUI Cruises are just some of the major cruise lines expanding their offerings, complete with brilliant features from huge waterparks and dazzling theatre shows to incredible dining options.

To give you a helping hand, we've put together a guide to some of the brand new cruise ships to get excited about for 2026…

## NORWEGIAN LUNA, NORWEGIA CRUISE LINE

*Gross tonnage: 156,300*

Norwegian Cruise Line's latest Prima Class ship is set to join the fleet in March 2026 when she will embark on a host of sun-soaked Caribbean sailings departing from Miami.

Boasting a passenger capacity of 3,571, the new ship has everything you could want for a fun-filled family holiday – waterparks, restaurants, game arcades, a beach club and multiple pools.

Thrill-seekers will definitely want to add the Aqua Slidecoaster to their bucket list – the world's first two-person hybrid rollercoaster and waterslide at sea that propels you along the ship as part of the jaw-dropping ride.

For the very brave there's also The Drop, the world's first free-fall slide at sea that plunges you down 10 storeys (and therefore definitely not for the faint-hearted).

● ***ncl.com***

## LEGEND OF THE SEAS, ROYAL CARIBBEAN

*Gross tonnage: 250,800*

The third of the cruise line's Icon Class ships (Icon of the Seas and Star of the Seas being the other two) will sail from Barcelona in summer 2026, before doing a winter season from Fort Lauderdale in Florida, with itineraries to the Caribbean including a trip to Royal Caribbean's private island, CocoCay.

With a passenger capacity of up to 5,628, this huge ship is sure to have plenty for holidaymakers to enjoy, with highlights including the largest waterpark at sea, the 40ft-long FlowRider surf simulator, dazzling theatre shows, epic dining venues and plenty more too.

● ***royalcaribbean.com***

## MEIN SCHIFF FLOW, TUI CRUISES

*Gross tonnage: 160,000*

TUI Cruises, based in Germany, is set to welcome the second ship in its InTUItion class in July 2026. The Mein Schiff Flow will be able to hold up to 3,984 passengers, and is set to offer heaps of entertainment on board.

For a start there will be plenty of spaces to unwind including a spa, gym and an impressive 17 bars and lounges, as well as a cosy reading corner lounge.

As for the pool, the top deck will feature a 25m-long outdoor pool with a "Marcoon roof" that partially spans the area so you can opt to sit out of the sun! (Oh and yes, there are whirlpools on the deck too).

The family-friendly ship will offer a wide array of kids' clubs as well as a jam-packed sports programme, and what will no doubt be dazzling shows in its theatre.

● ***meinschiff.com***

**ROOM WITH A VIEW**
*Luna cabin*

## MSC WORLD ASIA, MSC CRUISES

*Gross tonnage: 215,863*

MSC Cruises' new World Class ship is expected to make her debut in December 2026, with her first season taking place in the Mediterranean. The mega ship will be able to host up to 6,758 passengers, and could rival a small city thanks to the awe-inspiring amount of experiences.

We're talking over 40 bars, lounges and dining venues, including six speciality restaurants, a large theatre for West End-worthy shows, a roller-skating arena, bumper cars, waterparks and multiple pools – and that's all alongside impressive areas such as the Galleria and outdoor promenades where you'll find plenty of shops and cafes too.

● ***msccruises.co.uk***

> *'Luna's Aqua Slidecoaster is world's first two-person hybrid rollercoaster and waterslide'*

## CRUISE SHIPS COMING IN 2027

**We're not just getting new ships in 2026 either, some cruise lines have already confirmed further additions to their fleets for 2027.**

**Disney Cruise Line, Carnival, Royal Caribbean, Norwegian Cruise Line and MSC Cruises are all expected to welcome new ships next year, although they have yet to confirm names and full details of what will be onboard for passengers – watch this space.**

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DAY 5: MOTRIL, SPAIN

DAY 6: GIBRALTAR

DAY 7: IBIZA, SPAIN

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|---|---|---|
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| 30 May 2026 | 1129 | 1399 |
| 13 Jun 2026 | 999 | 1329 |
| 27 Jun 2026 | 1099 | 1479 |

***Barcelona To Lisbon***

| Date/£pp | Inside | Balcony |
|---|---|---|
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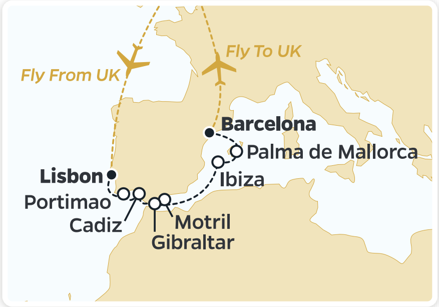

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DAY 2: EMBARK NORWEGIAN EPIC IN BARCELONA, SPAIN

DAY 3: MARSEILLE, FRANCE

DAY 4: VILLEFRANCHE-SUR-MER, FRANCE

DAY 5: FLORENCE/PISA, ITALY

DAY 7: SICILY, ITALY

DAY 8: AMALFI, ITALY

DAY 9: DISEMBARK IN ROME & FLY UK
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**Itineraries may vary - please call for more details*

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|---|---|---|
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| 16 May 2026 | 1049 | 1299 |
| 30 May 2026 | 999 | 1349 |
| 13 Jun 2026 | 1149 | 1499 |
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***Rome To Barcelona***

| Date/£pp | Inside | Balcony |
|---|---|---|
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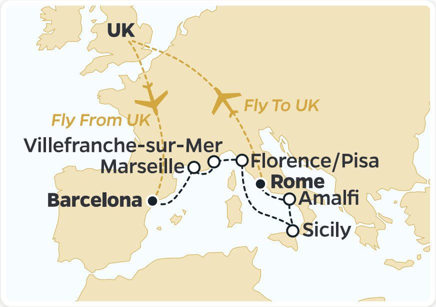
| 23 May 2026 | 1299 | 1499 |
| 6 Jun 2026 | 1029 | 1349 |
| 20 Jun 2026 | 1049 | 1449 |
| 4 Jul 2026 | 999 | 1269 |



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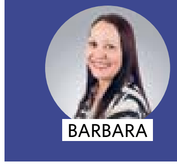
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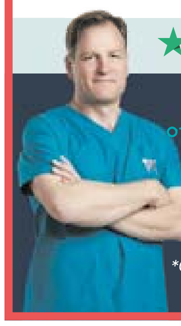

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*When it's cold outside, I crave proper comfort food, so this week I'm cooking dishes to bring a little warmth and joy. Think rich one-tray dinners, hearty pies and slowly simmered dishes that fill the house with good smells and make the dark evenings feel brighter. These are recipes you don't want to rush, perfect for settling in after a long day. Add a cosy pudding and you've got all you need for the week ahead.*

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*What's more comforting than a curry in pie form? This one-pot paneer pie is filled with a makhani-style filling and topped with a crisp puff pastry lid*

- **2tbsp vegetable oil**
- **440g paneer, cut into 2cm cubes**
- **4tbsp ghee or butter**
- **2 large onions, finely sliced**
- **2 large garlic cloves, crushed**
- **Thumb-sized piece of ginger, finely grated**
- **½ tsp hot chilli powder**
- **2tsp ground cumin**
- **2tsp fenugreek seeds**
- **1½ tbsp garam masala**
- **2 x 400g cans chopped tomatoes**
- **1tbsp caster sugar**
- **300g potatoes, peeled and cut into 2cm cubes**
- **150g spinach**
- **150g frozen peas**
- **100ml double cream**
- **2tbsp cashew nut butter**
- **Plain flour for dusting**
- **320g sheet all-butter puff pastry**
- **2 large eggs, 1 whole, 1 yolk only, lightly beaten together ( freeze the leftover egg white for another recipe)**
- **2tsp nigella seeds**
- **Pilau rice or green veg, to serve**

1 Heat the oil over a medium heat in a shallow flameproof casserole dish roughly 30cm wide. Add paneer and fry for 5 mins, turning with tongs until each side is golden. Remove from the pan and set aside on a plate lined with kitchen paper.

2 Heat the ghee or butter in the same dish over a medium-low heat, then add the onions and a big pinch of salt. Fry for 15 mins, or until softened and caramelised. Stir in the garlic and ginger, cook for 1 min, then tip in the spices and fry for a further 2 mins. Scrape the spiced onions into a food processor or blender along with the tomatoes and blitz until smooth. Pour back into the pan with one-and-a-half cans of water, then stir through the sugar and potatoes. Bring to the boil, lower to a simmer, then cover and cook, stirring occasionally, for 20-25 mins or until the potatoes are just tender.

3 Add the spinach and peas, and cook for 5 mins. Stir in the cream and cashew nut butter, then return the paneer to the pan and season to taste. Remove from the heat and set aside to cool completely.

4 Heat the oven to 220C/200C fan/gas 8. On a lightly floured surface, roll the pastry out to just bigger than your casserole dish. Cut a thin strip off each side and fix these around the edge of the casserole. Roll the pastry sheet over the top and press the edges with a fork to seal, and tuck in any overhang. Brush with the egg, sprinkle with the nigella seeds and bake for 30-35 mins or until deep golden brown. Leave to rest for 15 mins before serving with pilau rice or green veg.

#### PICK THE RIGHT PIE DISH

*If you don't have a shallow, ovenproof casserole dish, make your filling in a large pan, then transfer the mixture to a 28-30cm pie dish before topping with pastry and baking in the oven.*

### CREAMY BAKED GNOCCHI WITH SQUASH & SPINACH

**PREP: 15 MINS • COOK: 15 MINS • SERVES 2-3 • EASY**

*Impress dinner guests with this oozy squash and spinach gnocchi dish. Guests will never know you made it in just 30 minutes with the help of a microwave*

- **600g butternut squash, peeled, deseeded and cut into small chunks (450g prepared weight)**
- **1tbsp olive oil, plus a drizzle ( for optional air-frying)**
- **2 garlic cloves, crushed**
- **160g baby leaf spinach**
- **250g mascarpone**
- **grating of nutmeg**
- **30g parmesan or vegetarian alternative, grated**
- **500g gnocchi**
- **3tbsp fresh or dried breadcrumbs**

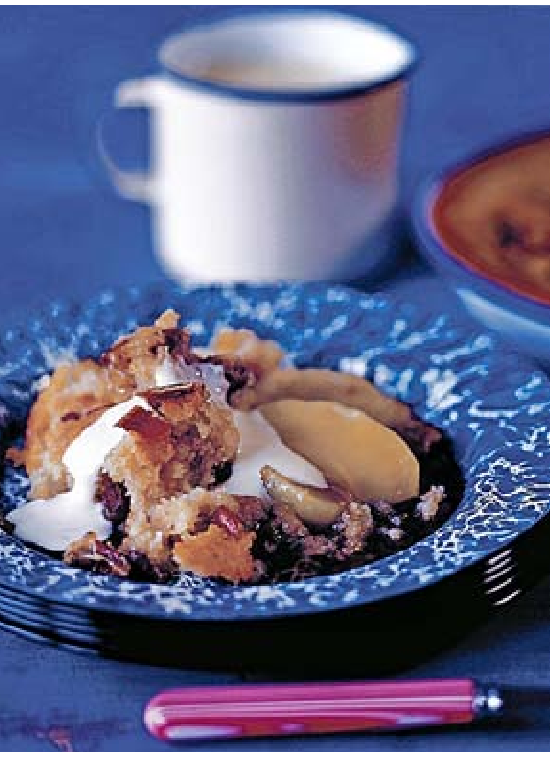
1 Put the squash in a heatproof bowl with a splash of water and pinch of seasoning, then cover and microwave on high for 5 mins. Or, toss the squash in a drizzle of oil and some seasoning, and cook for 12 mins at 200C in an air fryer until soft and caramelised. It can also be roasted in the oven for 25 mins.

2 Meanwhile, heat 2tsp of the oil in a large ovenproof frying pan over a medium heat and fry the garlic for 30 seconds until sizzling but not coloured. Add the spinach, season and cook until wilted.

3 When the squash is tender, roughly mash half of it using a fork. Stir the mashed squash and the mascarpone into the spinach, then add 150ml water and stir until you have a smooth, creamy sauce. Grate in a generous amount of nutmeg

and add half the parmesan. Gently stir in the gnocchi and squash chunks to coat in the sauce. Simmer for 1-2 mins until everything is heated through, adding a splash of water if the sauce is very thick. Scatter over the breadcrumbs and remaining parmesan.

4 Heat the grill to medium-high, then slide the gnocchi under for a few minutes until golden and bubbling at the edges.



## STICKY TOFFEE APPLE PUDDING

**PREP: 20 MINS • COOK: 40 MINS • SERVES 6 ADULTS OR 4 ADULTS AND 4 KIDS • EASY**

*Try a fruity version of the classic sticky toffee pudding for a rich after-dinner treat. Serve with cream, custard or vanilla ice cream*

- **85g butter, melted**
- **140g self-raising flour**
- **100g golden caster sugar**
- **1tbsp baking powder**
- **200ml milk**
- **1 egg, beaten**
- **1tsp vanilla extract**
- **2 Bramley apples (or other cooking) apples, peeled, cored and sliced**

**For the topping**

- **140g dark brown sugar**
- **50g pecans, roughly chopped**

1 Heat oven to 180C/fan 160C/gas 4. Grease a 2-litre/three-and-a-half pint ovenproof dish lightly with butter. Tip the flour, sugar and baking powder, along with a pinch of salt, into a large bowl. Mix together the milk, butter, egg and vanilla extract and stir into the dry ingredients until you get a smooth batter. Arrange the apples in the dish, spoon the batter on top and smooth with a knife until the apples are covered.

2 For the topping, pour 250ml boiling water over the sugar and stir together until smooth. Pour the liquid over the pudding mixture, then scatter over the pecans. Bake for about 40 mins until the pudding has risen and is golden. Use a big spoon to serve the pudding, making sure you get some of the gooey caramel sauce covering the bottom of the dish. Serve with pouring cream, warm custard or vanilla ice cream.

## CHICKEN ARRABBIATA STEW & PARMESAN DUMPLINGS

**PREP: 30 MINS • COOK: 1 HR • SERVES 4-6 EASY**

*Try a modern take on stew and dumplings with Italian classic tomato alla arrabbiata and parmesan dumplings. Simple and oh so comforting, it's perfect for cold weather cooking*

- **2tbsp olive oil**
- **1 onion, thinly sliced**
- **8 skinless and boneless chicken thighs, halved**
- **2 large garlic cloves, crushed**
- **1-1½ tsp chilli flakes**
- **4tbsp sun-dried tomato pesto**
- **250ml chicken stock**
- **2 x 400g can chopped tomatoes**
- **5 thyme sprigs, tied**
- **2tsp sugar**
- **½ small bunch of parsley, finely chopped**

**For the dumplings**

- **80g cold unsalted butter, cubed**
- **150g self-raising flour**
- **80g parmesan, grated**
- **50-60ml milk**

1 Heat the oil in a large shallow casserole dish. Fry the onion over a low-medium heat for 7 mins or until soft and turning translucent. Turn up the heat slightly, add the chicken and fry for 5 mins until beginning to brown around the edges. Tip the garlic and chilli into the casserole and fry for 1 min. Stir through the pesto, pour in the stock and tomatoes, then add the thyme, sugar and some seasoning. Turn the heat to low and cover with a lid. Cook gently for 40 mins. Remove the thyme and check the seasoning.

2 Heat the oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6. To make the dumplings, put the butter and flour in a bowl with 1/2 tsp fine salt, then rub the butter into the flour with your fingertips until it resembles fine breadcrumbs. Mix in 50g of the cheese and pour in 50ml of the milk, then swiftly combine with a cutlery knife until everything is well distributed and you have a soft dough (add more milk if it's too dry). Briefly bring the dough together on a work surface, then divide into eight balls.

3 Arrange the dumplings over the stew, then scatter each with the remaining cheese. Put in the oven and bake, uncovered, for 25 mins or until the dumplings are doubled in size and golden brown. Scatter over the parsley and serve.

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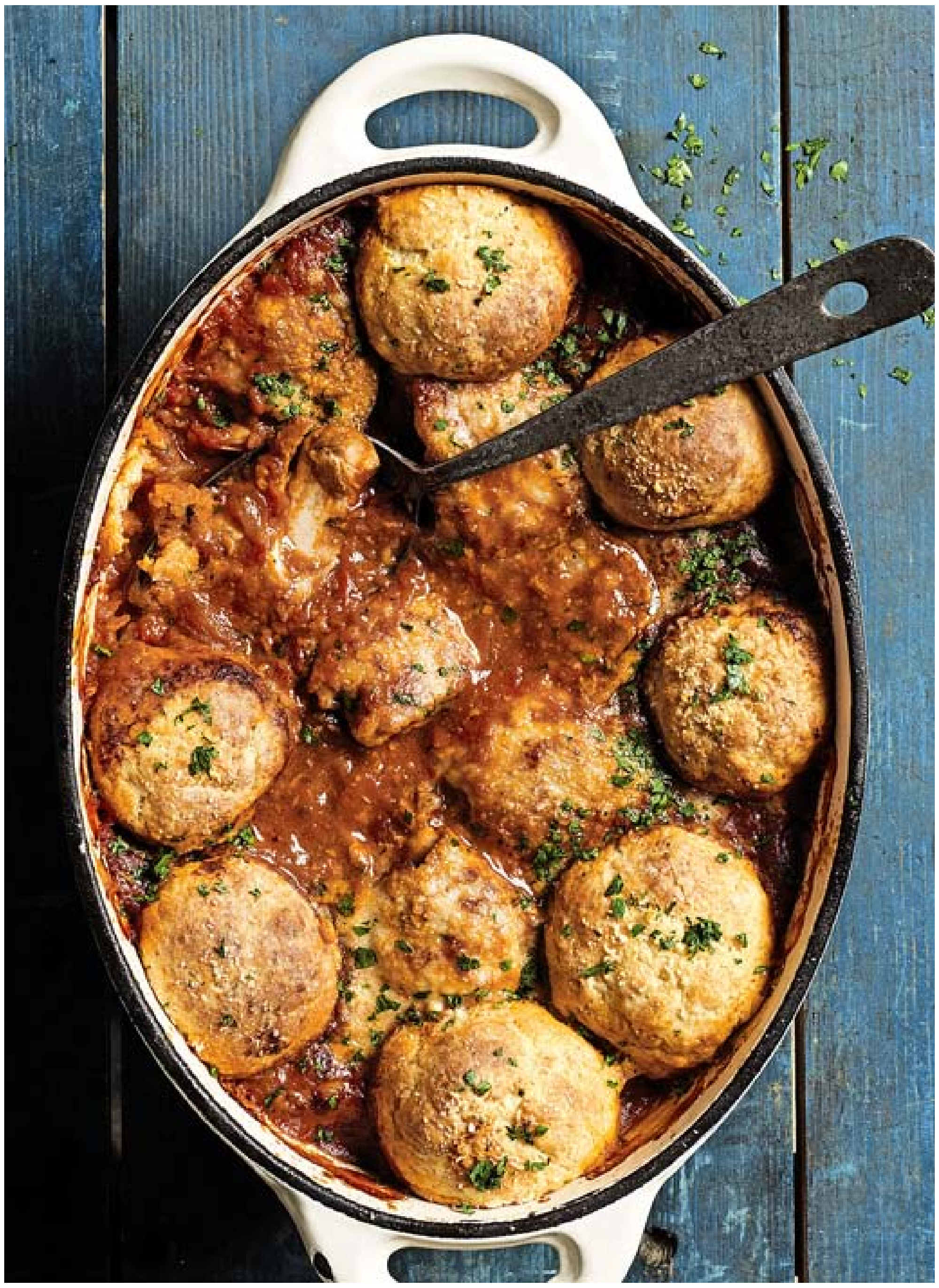

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# GROW THE PLOT THICKENS

*With* **DAVID DOMONEY** *daviddomoney.com YouTube.com/DavidDomoney*

# A heap of love for happy soil

## *Making compost is best fresh start for gardens*

Composting at home is one of the simplest January upgrades you can make for your garden. It turns everyday peelings and prunings into a rich soil improver, helping you cut down what goes into the bin. Start now and, as the season turns, you'll start to develop your own steady supply of compost to feed beds, borders and containers.

### CHOOSE YOUR SYSTEM

If you have space, a compost heap is worth it. Site it on bare soil or grass, in sun or light shade, so worms and other helpers can move in and get to work. A simple cover keeps heavy rain off and holds a little warmth in.

For smaller gardens, a compost bin keeps things tidy and is easier to fit into a corner. Wooden bins breathe well, which supports composting, while lidded plastic bins hold in moisture and look neater. Tumbling bins are useful if you want to mix contents quickly, but they work best when you have enough material to keep the drum at least partly full.

Wormeries are another excellent option for winter, producing a fine, crumbly compost in a relatively small footprint. Keep them sheltered and out of hard frost, and feed little and often, rather than adding everything in one go.

### WHAT CAN YOU COMPOST?

Think in terms of green and brown materials. Greens are nitrogen-rich, quick to break down and include vegetable peelings, coffee grounds and fresh leafy trimmings. Browns are carbon-rich, slower to rot, and include torn cardboard, scrunched paper, fallen leaves and small woody bits.

Aim for roughly two parts brown to one part green, then adjust as you go. Cover fresh greens with browns to reduce smells and discourage pests. Don't add meat, fish, dairy, nappies and pet waste, as they can attract rats and create nasty odours. For tea bags, check they are plastic-free before they go in.

### BUILD IT RIGHT

Start with a 10cm base layer of twiggy material or scrunched cardboard to help airflow and drainage. Add greens and browns in thin layers and chop bulky scraps smaller to speed things up. Compost should feel like a wrung-out sponge – damp, but not wet.

If it's dry, sprinkle water. If it's soggy, add more browns and mix.

### WINTER TWEAKS

In January, composting is slower, so don't worry if it feels cool. Turning once a month is plenty, and less is fine in cold spells. For fast results, build in bigger batches, insulate with cardboard, and keep a stash of shredded paper for balancing greens. If it smells sour, add browns and fork through for air.

Compost is ready when it's dark, crumbly and sweet-smelling, with no obvious scraps. Use finished home compost as a soil improver and mulch around plants, or to enrich borders and pots, but mix it with compost for seed sowing. Find out more in my ultimate guide to making compost on my YouTube channel, @daviddomoney.

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# TOP 5 GARDENING JOBS

**1** Tidy the bases of conifers by lifting away fallen needles, weeds and trapped leaves. This improves airflow and reduces damp pockets where pests and disease can linger. Check for bark damage at ground level, then finish with a thin mulch of composted bark, keeping it off the trunk.

**2** Check shed roofs for lifted felt edges after windy weather. Resecure any loose sections on a dry day, using felt tacks or exterior adhesive, so rain cannot creep underneath. Work safely from a stable ladder, look for soft timber on corners, clear gutters, and make sure doors still close cleanly.

**3** Inspect tree guards and ties, especially on newly planted young trees. Straighten guards that have blown askew, and loosen anything rubbing or starting to constrict the trunk. Firm the soil around wobbly stems, and replace missing stakes. If rabbits are active, check the guard still reaches high enough and is pegged down.

**4** Collect windblown moss from paths, patios and greenhouse glazing where it becomes slippery and blocks light. Use a stiff brush, then compost the moss or keep it for lining hanging baskets and topping pots. Avoid stripping moss from walls or lawns as it's a valuable habitat.

**5** Assess shrub shapes while branches are bare. Stand back, spot crossing stems and lopsided growth, and make a note of what needs attention later. Check that shrubs are not rocking about in winter winds. Mark any problem branches with a soft tie for now, then make sure you prune at the correct time for that shrub.

# FOCUS ON

## HELLEBORE

Helleborus, the hellebore, is a winter staple. Its plants form sturdy clumps of leathery foliage, and flowers can open midwinter onwards. The blooms are long-lasting too, often holding shape for weeks, even in cold, wet spells.

Hellebores suit areas of light shade where they get winter light before leaves return. They enjoy moisture-retentive, well-drained soil, so adding compost helps improve the ground and supports growth. Make sure heavy soil drains and pots aren't sitting in water.

With Helleborus × hybridus, removing a few older, tattered leaves at the base showcases the flowers and improves airflow. Use clean secateurs/pruners and take only what you need. If you are planting container-grown hellebores now, do it on a mild day when the soil is workable.

For winter whites near a doorway, Helleborus niger 'HGC Jacob' is a strong choice, while Helleborus × hybridus 'Walberton's Rosemary' has pink tones.

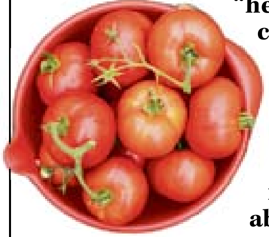
To learn more, head to my YouTube channel to see the latest episode of Step-by-Step Gardening @daviddomoney.

**Fun fact:** Many hellebores nod downwards which protects pollen, giving shelter to insects.

# DID YOU KNOW?

**A "galanthophile" is a snowdrop enthusiast. Many collect named cultivars and travel across Britain to see huge collections of winter displays, sometimes with hundreds of different varieties in flower.**

**Henry VII adopted the crowned hawthorn as a Tudor badge. It links to the Bosworth legend that Richard III's crown was found in a hawthorn bush and placed on Henry's head, so the emblem became a symbol of victory and new rule.**



**Tomatoes can be "healthier" when cooked because heat makes lycopene, a natural red antioxidant pigment in tomatoes, easier for your body to absorb, so sauces, soups and purees can offer more nutrients than raw slices.**

**"Arbour" was first recorded around 1300 in English writing, linked to a herb garden, and later came to mean a shaded nook or bower made from intertwined plants. The spelling was then nudged towards "arbor", the Latin for tree.**

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*Compiled by* **GRACE SALMON**

# Mood boosters

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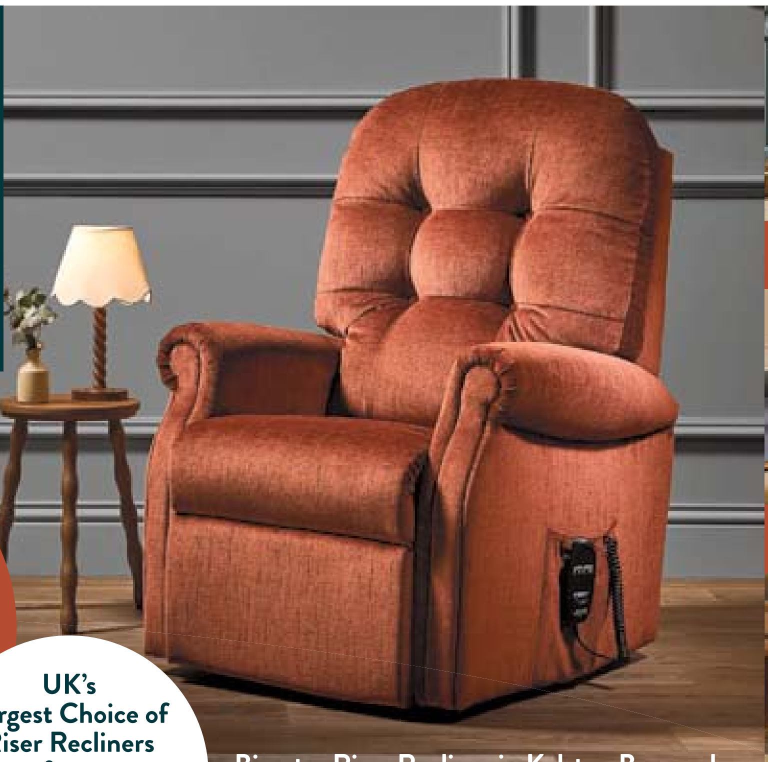

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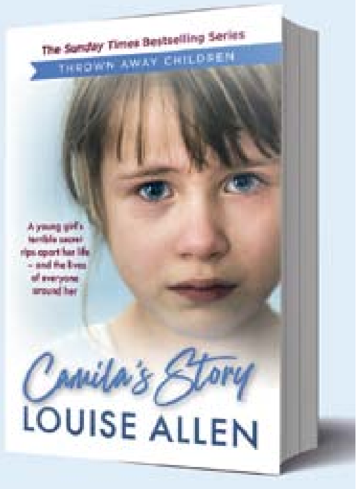

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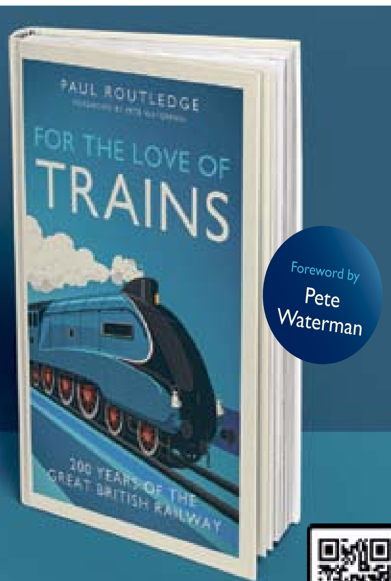
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Foreword by Pete Waterman

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**ON SALE IN ALL GOOD BOOKSHOPS AND AMAZON**

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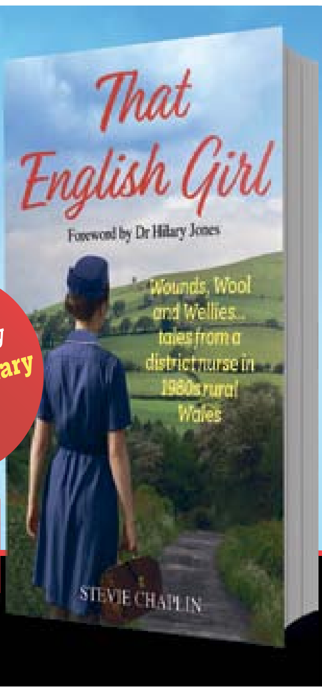
# TALES OF A DISTRICT NURSE IN 1980s RURAL WALES

She arrived as a stranger in a different land. She emerged wiser with great friends - and an incredible recipe for Welsh cakes!

Foreword by ITV's Dr Hilary Jones


That English Girl
Foreword by Dr Hilary Jones
Wounds, Wool and Wellies... tales from a district nurse in 1980s rural Wales
STEVIE CHAPLIN

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The Lewiston Fabric Pull-Out Sofabed combines comfort, style, and practicality in one versatile piece, making it ideal for modern living. Designed to seat two comfortably by day and transform into a double bed by night, it provides a flexible solution for guest visits, small apartments, or multi-purpose rooms. Its soft, durable fabric upholstery is both inviting to sit on and hard-wearing enough for everyday use.

### TIMELESS DESIGN FOR ANY SPACE

Featuring a classic rolled arm design, the Lewiston adds a subtle touch of elegance to any living area or guest room. Compact yet spacious enough for two, it balances style with functionality, fitting effortlessly into a range of interiors without compromising comfort.

### EASY CONVERSION FOR GUESTS

The practical pull-out mechanism allows the sofa to convert quickly into a double bed, providing an overnight solution for family or friends. Its solid wooden frame ensures stability and long-lasting support, giving you reassurance that both seating and sleeping will remain comfortable for years to come.

### READY TO ENJOY

Delivered and assembled by a dedicated two-person team, the Lewiston arrives ready to use without the hassle of lifting or assembly. Its combination of soft seating, durable construction, and flexible functionality makes it a thoughtful and practical addition to your home.

Whether you're relaxing with a book, hosting a friend overnight, or looking for a compact solution for a small living space, the Lewiston Fabric Pull-Out Sofabed provides a reliable, stylish, and versatile place to sit and sleep, blending practicality with classic charm.

Choose from 10 colours:

● ● ● ● ●
● ● ● ● ●

- ✓ Pull out sofabed mechanism converts into double bed
- ✓ Soft, durable fabric upholstery
- ✓ Size: H83 x W160 x D87 cm

**yimbly.com/Offer106** Quote **Offer106** Offer ends 31st January

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## AT A GLANCE

| STOCK MARKET | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| FTSE 100 | 10235.3 | ▼ | -3.6 |
| FTSE 250 | 23311.4 | ▲ | +31.4 |
| FTSE ALL SHARE | 5518.0 | ▼ | -0.7 |
| Shares Traded | 13600.6 million | | |

| POPULAR SHARES ON THE RISE | | |
|---|---|---|
| Abrdn | 225¼ | +¾ |
| AstraZeneca | 14052 | +26 |
| BAE Systems | 2088 | +47 |
| Barclays | 489 | +4¾ |
| BP | 440¼ | +2¼ |
| Centrica | 182 | +¾ |
| Marks & Spencer Group | 366¾ | +3¼ |
| National Grid | 1201½ | +20½ |
| NatWest Group | 652¾ | +13¾ |
| Rolls-Royce Holdings | 1285½ | +12½ |
| Shell | 2752½ | +6 |
| Whitbread | 2782 | +2 |

| POPULAR SHARES UNCHANGED | |
|---|---|
| Lloyds Banking Group | 102 |
| Vodafone Group | 100¾ |

| POPULAR SHARES ON THE SLIDE | | |
|---|---|---|
| Aviva | 675½ | -3½ |
| BT Group | 179 | -2 |
| GSK | 1816½ | -31½ |
| HSBC Holdings | 1232 | -4¾ |
| Int Consolidated Airlines | 410½ | -½ |
| Saga | 414½ | -1½ |
| Sainsbury (J) | 314¾ | -1¼ |
| Tesco | 422 | -6½ |
| Unilever | 4761½ | -19 |

| WORLD MARKETS | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| WALL STREET | | | |
| TOKYO | 53936.2 | ▼ | -174.3 |
| HONG KONG | 26845.0 | ▼ | -78.7 |
| GERMANY | 25297.1 | ▼ | -55.3 |
| FRANCE | 8258.9 | ▼ | -54.2 |

| STERLING VALUE | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Dollar | 1.338 | ▶ | 0.000 |
| Yen | 211.555 | ▼ | -0.722 |
| Euro | 1.153 | ▲ | +0.001 |

| DOLLAR VALUE | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Dollar/Yen | 158.093 | ▼ | -0.5526 |
| Dollar/Euro | 0.862 | ▲ | +0.0006 |

| COMMODITIES | | |
|---|---|---|
| GOLD($) | ▼ | 4593.53 |
| KRUGERRAND(£) | ▼ | 3432.97 |
| SILVER(pence) | ▼ | 6663.92 |
| BRENT CRUDE($) | ▲ | 64.50 |

| OTHER INDICATORS | |
|---|---|
| Base rate | 3.75% |
| Halifax mortgage rate | 5.95% |
| Retail Price Index | +3.8% (CPI +3.2%) |
| House price Index | +1.7% |
| Unemployment | 1,832,000 |

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## TOURIST'S POUND

| | |
|---|---|
| Australia | 1.95 dollar |
| Canada | 1.81 dollar |
| China | 8.74 renminbi |
| Czech Rep. | 26.28 koruna |
| Denmark | 8.17 krone |
| Eurozone | 1.13 euro |
| Hong Kong | 9.81 dollar |
| Hungary | 416.49 forint |
| Israel | 3.94 shekel |
| Japan | 203.26 yen |
| Jordan | 0.89 dinar |
| Mexico | 22.34 peso |
| New Zealand | 2.26 dollar |
| Norway | 13.06 krone |
| Poland | 4.62 zloty |
| Saudi Arabia | 4.78 riyal |
| South Africa | 20.99 rand |
| Sweden | 11.75 krona |
| Switzerland | 1.04 franc |
| Thailand | 40.30 baht |
| Turkey | 53.85 lira |
| United States | 1.32 dollar |

# We must challenge populist threats to banks, says chief

By **Anna Wise**

BANK of England governor Andrew Bailey said international institutions must challenge populism, in a broadside that comes amid threats to the independence of the US Federal Reserve.

He joined global central bank leaders "standing in full solidarity" with the embattled Fed.

America's central banking system has incurred the wrath of president Donald Trump for not moving as quickly or as deeply as he would like in slashing interest rates.

And Fed chairman Jerome Powell says he is facing a criminal investigation related to his testimony about office building renovation projects.

Bailey said the "rise of so-called populism makes the whole task harder" for agencies and bodies whose job it is to assess imbalances in the global economy.

In a speech to the Bellagio Group of economists and central bankers, he said: "Part of the purpose of international agencies is that from time to time they have to tell us what we don't want to hear, let alone act upon.

"Of course, they have to be accountable for the accuracy and quality of the assessment. But, accepting that, we have to call out messenger shooting." He went on to say that populism has a "tendency to attribute unfavourable conditions to outside forces, rather than point to shared challenges.

**Bailey warning on independence**

"And, third, encouraging a decline in trust such that institutions – domestic and international – are viewed as distant, unresponsive and acting for the benefit of powerful and uncontrollable interests.

"For those of us who are institutionalised, the answer is that we have to challenge back, in deeds more than just words."

Mr Bailey did not specify which countries or leaders he was referring to, but his remarks come at a time when the Trump administration is escalating its confrontation with the Fed.

On Tuesday, Mr Bailey joined the heads of central banks including in Europe, Sweden, Canada and Australia in putting his signature to a statement of support for Mr Powell.

The bankers said they "stand in full solidarity" with the Fed, adding that it was "critical" to preserve the independence of central banks.

## FOOD SUPPLIER MERGES WITH RIVAL

Greencore
Making every day taste better
Greencore

*Greencore in driving seat*

**GREENCORE has completed its £1.2billion deal to snap up fellow supermarket supplier Bakkavor after the London-listed firm received court approval on Thursday.**

**The tie-up will form a combined food group with annual sales of about £4billion. The firms had to address concerns from the competition regulator that the move could result in the "substantial lessening of competition" for the supply of chilled supermarket sauces, which could raise prices.**

**So Greencore sold its only chilled soup and sauces plant in Bristol to the Compleat Food Group. Greencore boss Dalton Philips said: "We're really excited by the prospects for our business."**

# AI projects in driving seat to fix transport systems

**AI could help rail reliability**

ARTIFICIAL intelligence is set to play a bigger role in the day-to-day running of Britain's transport networks.

Ministers and industry figures want digital investment to move from pilot projects to country-wide deployment.

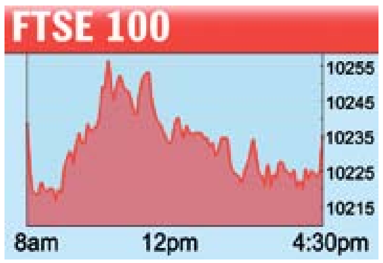
Transport select committee chair Ruth Cadbury said the government is committed to backing AI and data-driven tools to improve road and rail performance, as pressure mounts to cut delays and improve reliability. It could also help fix potholes and congestion.

Industry leaders said focus must move from experimentation to embedding AI tools into core operations. Daren Wood, of rail tech provider Resonate Group, said: "Having a fully optimised transport network supported by the latest digital capabilities is vital for unlocking future economic growth."

The Department for Transport has set out how to use AI for predictive maintenance, smarter systems and planning.

## ++ THE FTSE 100 THE FTSE 100 THE FTSE 100 ++

| | | | 52 WEEK | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| COMPANY | CLOSE | +/- | HIGH | LOW |
| 3i Group | 3361 | +20 | 4459 | 2999 |
| A.B. Foods | 1858½ | -10½ | 2337 | 1838 |
| Admiral Group | † | | | |
| Airtel Africa | 358 | -1¼ | 372¾ | 123¾ |
| Alliance Trust | 1294 | -8 | 1324 | 1050 |
| Anglo American | 3240 | -80 | 3320 | 2003¾ |
| Antofagasta | 3560 | -105 | 3665 | 1383 |
| Ashtead Group | 5302# | -22 | 5594 | 3659 |
| AstraZeneca | 14052 | +26 | 14346 | 9667 |
| Auto Trader | 583# | +2½ | 908½ | 568½ |
| Aviva | 675½ | -3½ | 692½ | 491¾ |
| Babcock International | 1484# | +16 | 1502 | 498¼ |
| BAE Systems | 2088 | +47 | 2093 | 1180½ |
| Barclays | 489 | +4¾ | 489 | 241¾ |
| Barratt Development | 380½ | +5 | 482¼ | 350 |
| Beazley Group | 820 | +1 | 973 | 769 |
| Berkeley Grp Hldgs | 3980 | +52 | 4324 | 3524 |
| BP | 440¼ | +2¼ | 476¼ | 331¾ |
| British Amer.Tob | 4326# | -13 | 4421 | 2911 |
| British Land | 410¼ | +6 | 420½ | 321¼ |
| BT Group | 179# | -2 | 222¾ | 139½ |
| Bunzl | 2074 | -4 | 3452 | 2032 |
| Burberry Group | 1272 | -16½ | 1371½ | 627¾ |
| Centrica | 182 | +¾ | 182¼ | 132¼ |
| Coca-Cola HBC | 3926 | +4 | 4034 | 2762 |
| Compass Group | 2291# | +10 | 2843 | 2275 |
| Convatec Group | 236½ | -½ | 295½ | 221¼ |
| CRH | 9140 | -76 | 9704 | 6142 |
| Croda International | 2747 | -18 | 3383 | 2465 |
| DCC | 4478 | -26 | 5600 | 4350 |
| Diageo | 1655½ | -23 | 2503½ | 1577 |
| Diploma | 5685# | +20 | 5725 | 3624 |
| EasyJet | 485 | +1 | 587¾ | 427½ |
| Entain | 703 | -23¾ | 1022 | 501¼ |
| Experian Group | 3296# | -34 | 4088 | 3091 |
| F&C Inv Tst | 1264# | -8 | 1276 | 962 |
| Flutter Entert. | 14455 | -665 | 23630 | 14415 |
| Fresnillo | 3746 | -8 | 3788 | 657 |
| Games Workshop | 18770# | -230 | 19840 | 12410 |
| GlaxoSmithKline | 1816½ | -31½ | 1901½ | 1264 |
| Glencore | 478½ | -12½ | 491 | 230 |
| Haleon | 364 | +1¾ | 415¼ | 326½ |
| Halma | 3698# | +22 | 3716½ | 2360 |
| Hikma | 1570 | +8 | 2340 | 1507 |
| Hiscox | 1389 | -8 | 1429 | 1035 |
| HSBC Holdings | 1232 | -4¾ | 1240 | 713¼ |
| IMI | 2688 | +8 | 2702 | 1606 |
| Imperial Brands | 3044 | -19 | 3312 | 2597 |
| Informa | 889½ | -4¾ | 993½ | 640¼ |
| InterContinental Htl | 10315 | -3340 | 10509¼ | 5547¼ |
| Intermediate Cap.Grp | 2050 | +20 | 2450 | 1569 |
| Intertek Group | 4582 | -38 | 5385 | 4064 |
| Intl Consolidated Airlines | 410½ | -½ | 437 | 224½ |
| JD Sports | 81¾ | -1¾ | 104½ | 63¼ |
| Kingfisher | 318¼ | +3¼ | 329¾ | 238½ |
| Land Securities | 650 | +8½ | 652 | 499½ |
| Legal & General | 265¾ | -¼ | 267 | 215¼ |
| Lloyds Banking Grp | 102 | | 102¼ | 57¼ |
| London & Stamford Prop | 204 | +1½ | 204¾ | 170½ |
| London Stock Ex | 9184 | +98 | 12095 | 8138 |
| M&G | 299½ | +½ | 301 | 172¾ |
| Marks & Spencer | 366¾ | +3¼ | 411¼ | 318½ |
| Melrose | 640¾ | +4½ | 680 | 386 |
| Mondi | 896 | -13½ | 1326 | 819 |
| National Grid | 1201½ | +20½ | 1201½ | 919¾ |
| NatWest Group | 652¾ | +13¾ | 665½ | 407¼ |
| Next | 13760 | -200 | 14580 | 9270 |
| Pearson | 939 | -39½ | 1379 | 934 |
| Pershing Square Hold | 4644 | -104 | 5090 | 3244 |
| Persimmon | 1414½ | +8 | 1414½ | 1037½ |
| Phoenix Group | 740½ | -4½ | 746 | 499¼ |
| Prudential | 1182½ | -2½ | 1195½ | 624¾ |
| Reckitt Benckiser | 6116 | -30 | 6228 | 4633 |
| RELX | 3094 | -29 | 4135 | 2972 |
| Rentokil Initial | 464½ | +1¾ | 473½ | 309½ |
| Rightmove | 515¼ | -2½ | 823¾ | 504½ |
| Rio Tinto | 6347 | -121 | 6468 | 4117 |
| Rolls-Royce Group | 1285½ | +12½ | 1305 | 578¾ |
| Sage Group | 1054# | +14½ | 1348 | 1024½ |
| Sainsbury (J) | 314¾ | -1¼ | 355¾ | 228¾ |
| Schroders | 467 | +8½ | 472¾ | 289¼ |
| Scottish Mortgage | 1215 | -½ | 1219 | 815¼ |
| SEGRO | 747½ | -3¾ | 754¼ | 599 |
| Severn Trent | 2835 | +16 | 2907 | 2370 |
| Shell | 2752½ | +6 | 2931½ | 2291½ |
| Smith & Nephew | 1236 | -2 | 1435 | 937¾ |
| Smiths Group | 2612 | +50 | 2614 | 1687 |
| Smurfit Kappa | 3173 | -62 | 4495 | 2558 |
| Spirax-Sarco | 7185 | -70 | 8190 | 5445 |
| SSE | 2343# | +26 | 2349 | 1463½ |
| St James's Place | 1515½ | +9½ | 1538½ | 791 |
| Standard Chartered | 1878½ | +28 | 1878½ | 878¾ |
| Tesco | 422 | -6½ | 475½ | 314½ |
| Unilever | 4761½ | -19 | 6177½ | 4631 |
| United Utilities | 1225# | +6½ | 1242 | 944½ |
| Vodafone Group | 100¾# | | 103¾ | 64 |
| Weir Group | 3088 | +20 | 3088 | 1984 |
| Whitbread | 2782 | +2 | 3274 | 2335 |



## Fraud pressure on UK retailers rises

**RISING fraud is putting pressure on UK retailers, with half of businesses at risk of closing or cutting back in the year ahead, research finds.**

**The report from leading European financial technology provider payabl. shows that the impact of crime on operations, margins and customer trust has become so significant that 48% of retail leaders have actively considered stopping trading or reducing their output.**

**Financial losses from fraud to UK firms was £1.17billion in 2024, according to UK Finance.**

**Ugne Buraciene, CEO of Cyprus-based payabl., said: "Without stronger coordination between banks, governments, payment providers and online platforms, fraud will continue to dent business confidence and hinder UK economic growth in 2026."**

+ BG + Barclays + BT + Centrica + Dixons Carphone + First Group + HSBC + Kingfisher + Marks & Spencer + Next + Prudential + Rolls-Royce + Sainsburys + Tesco + Unilever + Vodafone + Whitbread + WPP

# SHARES AT A GLANCE

| COMPANY | CLOSE | +/- | 52 WEEK HIGH | 52 WEEK LOW |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Aerospace & Defence** | | | | |
| Avon Rubber | 1988 | +8 | 2180 | 1338 |
| Babcock International | 1484# | +16 | 1502 | 498¼ |
| BAE Systems | 2088 | +47 | 2093 | 1180½ |
| Chemring Group | 546 | +5 | 593 | 297½ |
| QinetiQ Group | 515½# | +12 | 572 | 361 |
| Rolls-Royce Group | 1285½ | +12½ | 1305 | 578¾ |
| Senior | 228 | | 231½ | 115¾ |
| **Alternative Energy** | | | | |
| Porvair | 900 | +4 | 908 | 626 |
| **Banks** | | | | |
| Barclays | 489 | +4¾ | 489 | 241¾ |
| Bco Santander | 903 | -7 | 912 | 398 |
| Close Brothers | 535 | +25½ | 556¼ | 225½ |
| HSBC Holdings | 1232 | -4¾ | 1240 | 713¼ |
| Investec | 597 | +2½ | 606 | 414 |
| Lloyds Banking Grp | 102 | | 102¼ | 57¼ |
| Metro Bank | 130¾ | +1¾ | 133½ | 81 |
| NatWest Group | 652¾ | +13¾ | 665½ | 407¼ |
| Paragon Group | 902 | +5½ | 970 | 686½ |
| Standard Chartered | 1878½ | +28 | 1878½ | 878¾ |
| **Beverages** | | | | |
| Barr (AG) | 645 | +3 | 711 | 574 |
| Coca-Cola HBC | 3926 | +4 | 4034 | 2762 |
| Diageo | 1655½ | -23 | 2503½ | 1577 |
| **Chemicals** | | | | |
| Carclo | 57½ | -1½ | 80 | 21 |
| Croda International | 2747 | -18 | 3383 | 2465 |
| Elementis | 171½ | -2½ | 176½ | 115 |
| Johnson Matthey | 2340# | -18 | 2370 | 1156 |
| Synthomer | 64¼ | +¾ | 158¼ | 46 |
| Treatt | 218 | -3 | 450 | 186½ |
| Victrex | 700 | -2 | 1066 | 589 |
| **Construction & Materials** | | | | |
| Balfour Beatty | 735 | +15½ | 736 | 390½ |
| Costain Group | 163 | -½ | 168 | 86 |
| CRH | 9140 | -76 | 9704 | 6142 |
| Dialight | 332 | +2 | 364 | 89 |
| Galliford Try | 532 | +3 | 546 | 321 |
| Gleeson (MJ) | 403 | +18 | 538 | 320 |
| Keller Group | 1740 | +32 | 1740 | 1240 |
| Kier Group | 224 | +2 | 231½ | 115¼ |
| Marshalls | 177½ | -2½ | 293 | 162 |
| Morgan Sindall | 4985 | +25 | 4995 | 2945 |
| Severfield-Rowen | 28½ | | 52¼ | 19 |
| Smart (J) & Co | 132½# | | 132½ | 110 |
| **Electricity** | | | | |
| Drax Group | 903½ | +3½ | 908½ | 536½ |
| SSE | 2343# | +26 | 2349 | 1463½ |
| Telecom Plus | 1366 | -4 | 2085 | 1340 |
| **Electronic & Electrical Equipment** | | | | |
| Acal | 612# | +6 | 738 | 486 |
| Halma | 3698# | +22 | 3716½ | 2360 |
| Oxford Instruments | 2410 | +85 | 2415 | 1500 |
| Renishaw | 3875 | +20 | 3940 | 2145 |
| TT Electronics | 111½ | +1½ | 154 | 73 |
| XP Power | 905 | +28 | 1314 | 621 |
| **Equity Investment Instruments** | | | | |
| Aberdeen Asian Sml | 382 | -1 | 385 | 256 |
| Aberforth Smll.Co. | 1638 | +8 | 1642 | 1212 |
| Acorn Income | | | | |
| Albion Tech.& Gen. VCT | 66 | | 71 | 65½ |
| Alliance Trust | 1294 | -8 | 1324 | 1050 |
| Aurora Inv.Tst. | 275 | | 279 | 212½ |
| AVI Global Tst | 261 | -1½ | 266½ | 202 |
| Baillie Gifford Japan | 940 | +1 | 951 | 657 |
| Baillie Gifford Shin Nip | 138½ | +¾ | 139½ | 95½ |
| Bankers Inv.Tst | 135¾ | -¼ | 136½ | 101 |
| Baronsmead VCT.2 | 48½ | | 52 | 46½ |
| BH Macro GBP | 401 | -1½ | 414 | 371½ |
| Biotech Growth Trust | 1265 | -10 | 1295 | 620 |
| BlackRock Mining | 929 | -26 | 955 | 406½ |
| Bluehone AiM VCT2 | 28¼# | | 31 | 28¼ |
| British Assets Tst | 27¾ | -¼ | 49¼ | 26¼ |
| Brunner Inv.Tst | 1490 | | 1502 | 1140 |
| Caledonia Inv. | 375 | -3 | 391½ | 334½ |
| City Natural Res.Yld | 386 | -7 | 394 | 165¾ |
| City Of London | 548 | -1 | 550 | 411½ |
| Dunedin Ent.IT. | | | | |
| Dunedin Income | 311 | -1 | 314 | 262 |
| Edin Wwide Inv | 228 | +1½ | 229½ | 143 |
| Edin.Inv.Tst. | 824 | -3 | 839 | 680 |
| Edin.US Tracker | 386½# | +½ | 390 | 289½ |
| Elderstreet VCT | 38¾ | +2¼ | 41 | 36½ |
| F&C Cap&Inc. | 350 | -½ | 353 | 287 |

| COMPANY | CLOSE | +/- | 52 WEEK HIGH | 52 WEEK LOW |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| F&C Inv Tst | 1264# | -8 | 1276 | 962 |
| F&C Smaller Cos | 184¾# | +¼ | 185 | 136½ |
| F&C US Smaller Companies | 1430 | -5 | 1522½ | 1115 |
| Fidelity Asian | 608 | -4 | 628 | 454 |
| Fidelity European | 432 | -2 | 434½ | 338½ |
| Fidelity Special | 431½ | +½ | 432½ | 295½ |
| Finsbury Gwth&In | 836 | -1 | 962 | 795 |
| Foresight Tech.VCT | 65½ | | 75½ | 62 |
| Genesis E.M.F. | 1132 | | 1142 | 632 |
| Graphite Ent | 1508 | -28 | 1600 | 1070 |
| Hansa Tst 'A' | 273 | +1 | 276 | 190 |
| Hansa Tst Plc | 276 | +1 | 278 | 192½ |
| Henderson Far Est | 251½ | +1 | 253½ | 190½ |
| Henderson High Inc | 195½# | +1 | 197 | 151 |
| Herald Inv.Tst. | 2625 | -10 | 2650 | 1738 |
| HGCapital Tst. | 506 | -2 | 538 | 448 |
| HSBC Infrastructure | 119½ | -¾ | 125¼ | 106 |
| Impax Env.Mkt | 431 | +24 | 432 | 310½ |
| Int.Biotech.Tst | 970# | -2 | 996 | 480 |
| International Public | 129¼ | -¾ | 130½ | 107¾ |
| Invesco Asia | 443# | -2 | 447 | 300 |
| Invesco Perp UK | 384 | +3 | 386 | 313½ |
| JPM American | 1128 | -4 | 1186 | 869 |
| JPM Asian | 480½# | -2½ | 483 | 331½ |
| JPM Claverhouse | 880 | -8 | 888 | 660 |
| JPM Emerg Mkt | 144½# | | 145 | 95 |
| JPM Euro Sml Co. | 619# | -1 | 621¼ | 444½ |
| JPM Global Emerging | 180# | | 181½ | 118½ |
| JPM Indian | 990 | -6 | 1106 | 904 |
| JPM Japanese | 758# | -1 | 761 | 493 |
| JPM Overseas IT | 589 | +1 | 610 | 480 |
| JPM Smaller Co | 335 | -½ | 338 | 253 |
| JPM US Sml Co. | 426 | -1 | 516 | 338 |
| Jupiter Euro. | 941 | +6 | 959 | 757 |
| JZ Capital Partners | 187 | | 220 | 184 |
| Law Debenture | 1118# | -6 | 1128 | 788 |
| Lowland Invest Co | 165½# | +½ | 166 | 114½ |
| Majedie Inv. | 280 | +4 | 282 | 230 |
| Manchester&Lon. | 790 | -13 | 944 | 512 |
| Martin Currie Prtflo Tst | 358# | | 386 | 295 |
| Maven Income And Growth VCT | 33½# | | 38 | 33½ |
| Mercantile Inv Tst | 266# | +1 | 266½ | 202½ |
| Merchants Tst | 617 | +1 | 620 | 474 |
| Mid Wynd Int. | 790 | -6 | 836 | 664 |
| Monks Inv.Tst. | 1554 | +2 | 1560 | 1036 |
| Montanaro Euro Tst | 170½ | +½ | 183½ | 138 |
| Montanaro Uk | 104½# | +½ | 106½ | 87¾ |
| Murray Inc.Tst. | 932 | -1 | 938 | 754 |
| Murray Int.Tst | 333# | +1 | 335 | 239 |
| New India | 762 | +4 | 832 | 686 |
| New Star Inv.Tst | 124 | -5 | 130 | 100 |
| North Atl.Smlr.Tst | | | | |
| Northern 2 VCT | 53½# | | 57 | 52½ |
| Northern Venture | 56½# | | 58½ | 55½ |
| Oxford Tech 2 VCT | 6½ | | 7 | 5½ |
| Pacific Assets | 376 | +1 | 378 | 302 |
| Pacific Horizon | 861 | | 868 | 507 |
| Pantheon Int. | 387 | +3½ | 388½ | 266 |
| Pershing Square Hold | 4644 | -104 | 5090 | 3244 |
| Polar Cap.Tech | 492½ | | 495 | 255½ |
| RCM Technology Trust | 550 | +1 | 553 | 307 |
| RIT Capital Partners | 2220 | -30 | 2275 | 1722 |
| Ruffer Investment | 299½ | | 304 | 270 |
| Schroder Asia | 697# | -3 | 702 | 461½ |
| Schroder Inc. | 354# | | 356 | 255 |
| Schroder Japan | 331# | | 334 | 209 |
| Schroder UK | 211 | +1 | 212 | 158½ |
| Schroder UK M&S | 748 | +16 | 748 | 520 |
| Scottish American | 524 | -1 | 527 | 454½ |
| Scottish Mortgage | 1215 | -½ | 1219 | 815¼ |
| Shires Inc. | 316# | +2½ | 316½ | 222 |
| Small Comp Div.Tst | 139 | -½ | 155 | 124 |
| Standard Life Equity | 417# | +3½ | 421 | 288½ |
| Standard Life UK Sml | 523 | +2 | 531 | 426 |
| Temple Bar | 381½ | -2½ | 386½ | 258 |
| Templeton Emrg. | 254½# | -½ | 257 | 151¾ |
| The European Inv.Tst | 110½# | -½ | 111 | 84 |
| Throgmorton Tst. | 653 | +12 | 655 | 469 |
| TR Euro.Growth | 225 | +½ | 226½ | 163 |
| TR Prop. IT | 333½ | +½ | 338½ | 277½ |
| Witan Pacific | 315 | -2 | 322 | 222 |
| Wwide Healthcare | 378 | +½ | 397 | 265½ |
| **Financial Services** | | | | |
| 3i Group | 3361 | +20 | 4459 | 2999 |
| 3i Infrastructure | 379 | -6 | 385½ | 301 |
| Abrdn | 225¼ | +¾ | 229¾ | 123¾ |
| Ashmore Group | 234½ | +9 | 238¾ | 125 |
| Guinness Peat Group | 83¾ | -1 | 96 | 68¼ |

| COMPANY | CLOSE | +/- | 52 WEEK HIGH | 52 WEEK LOW |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| IG Group | 1328 | +1 | 1342 | 913 |
| Intermediate Cap.Grp. | 2050 | +20 | 2450 | 1569 |
| International Pers Fin | 236½ | +½ | 237 | 121½ |
| IP Group | 56½ | -1¾ | 65 | 34¾ |
| Jupiter Fund Man. | 186½ | +2 | 188½ | 68 |
| Liontrust Asset Man | 268 | +4½ | 458 | 231½ |
| London Stock Ex. | 9184 | +98 | 12095 | 8138 |
| M&G | 299½ | +½ | 301 | 172¾ |
| Man Group | 271¾ | +3 | 272¼ | 154¾ |
| Provident Financial | 118 | +¼ | 128½ | 47¾ |
| Rathbone Brothers | 2220 | +65 | 2250 | 1406 |
| S & U | 2310 | +20 | 2350 | 1330 |
| Schroders | 467 | +8½ | 472¾ | 289¼ |
| St James's Place | 1515½ | +9½ | 1538½ | 791 |
| Tullett Prebon | 256½ | -½ | 311½ | 228 |
| Walker Crips Group | 13¼ | | 15¾ | 7½ |
| **Fixed Line Telecommunications** | | | | |
| Airtel Africa | 358 | -1¼ | 372¾ | 123¾ |
| BT Group | 179# | -2 | 222¾ | 139½ |
| **Food & Drug Retailers** | | | | |
| Greggs | 1655 | -18 | 2234 | 1418 |
| Marks & Spencer | 366¾ | +3¼ | 411¼ | 318½ |
| Ocado | 282 | -3¾ | 395½ | 172¼ |
| Sainsbury (J) | 314¾ | -1¼ | 355¾ | 228¾ |
| Tesco | 422 | -6½ | 475½ | 314½ |
| **Food Producers** | | | | |
| A.B. Foods | 1858½ | -10½ | 2337 | 1838 |
| Anglo-Eastern | 1525 | +95 | 1525 | 612 |
| Carr's Milling | 140 | +5 | 157 | 117 |
| Cranswick | 5120# | +10 | 5490 | 4625 |
| Glanbia | 1369¾ | +86¾ | 1369¾ | 789 |
| Greencore Group | 273½# | -1½ | 280½ | 169¼ |
| Kerry Grp 'A' Shs | 6640¾ | +208 | 8756 | 6172½ |
| Premier Foods | 171½ | -1 | 214½ | 167 |
| REA Holdings | 128½ | +1½ | 133 | 61½ |
| Tate & Lyle | 376¾ | +¼ | 661 | 358 |
| **Gas, Water & Multiutilities** | | | | |
| Centrica | 182 | +¾ | 182¼ | 132¼ |
| National Grid | 1201½ | +20½ | 1201½ | 919¾ |
| Pennon Group | 545 | +4 | 552 | 387½ |
| Severn Trent | 2835 | +16 | 2907 | 2370 |
| United Utilities | 1225# | +6½ | 1242 | 944½ |
| **General Industrials** | | | | |
| Bunzl | 2074 | -4 | 3452 | 2032 |
| Goodwin | 24400 | -100 | 24600 | 6180 |
| Melrose | 640¾ | +4½ | 680 | 386 |
| Mondi | 896 | -13½ | 1326 | 819 |
| Smiths Group | 2612 | +50 | 2614 | 1687 |
| Smurfit Kappa | 3173 | -62 | 4495 | 2558 |
| **General Retailers** | | | | |
| ASOS | 298 | -2½ | 436½ | 218½ |
| Auto Trader | 583# | +2½ | 908½ | 568½ |
| B&M Europ Value Ret | 167¾ | -3 | 344½ | 155¼ |
| Caffyns | 425 | | 500 | 415 |
| Dixons Carphone | 125¾# | -¼ | 146 | 85¼ |
| Dunelm | 950 | +8½ | 1232 | 858½ |
| Frasers Group | 675½ | -4½ | 770 | 546 |
| Halfords Group | 144¾# | -1¼ | 174½ | 116¼ |
| Headlam Group | 44¾ | | 142 | 44½ |
| Howden Joinery | 860 | -2½ | 914½ | 679½ |
| Inchcape | 785½ | -4 | 808 | 638 |
| JD Sports | 81¾ | -1¾ | 104½ | 63¼ |

| COMPANY | CLOSE | +/- | 52 WEEK HIGH | 52 WEEK LOW |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Kingfisher | 318¼ | +3¼ | 329¾ | 238½ |
| Next | 13760 | -200 | 14580 | 9270 |
| Pets At Home | 200½ | +2½ | 273¼ | 192¾ |
| RM Group | 111 | | 118 | 82 |
| Topps Tiles | 44½# | -½ | 50 | 29 |
| WH Smith | 629½ | -8 | 1307 | 613½ |
| **Health Care Equipment & Services** | | | | |
| Convatec Group | 236½ | -½ | 295½ | 221¼ |
| Flying Brands | +½ | -¼ | 2 | +½ |
| Smith & Nephew | 1236 | -2 | 1435 | 937¾ |
| **Household Goods & Home Construction** | | | | |
| Barratt Development | 380½ | +5 | 482¼ | 350 |
| Bellway | 2730 | +22 | 2982 | 2166 |
| Berkeley Grp Hldgs | 3980 | +52 | 4324 | 3524 |
| Bovis Homes | 652¼ | +15½ | 701 | 510¾ |
| Mcbride | 145 | -½ | 159 | 101½ |
| Persimmon | 1414½ | +8 | 1414½ | 1037½ |
| Reckitt Benckiser | 6116 | -30 | 6228 | 4633 |
| Taylor Wimpey | 107 | +3 | 123¼ | 93 |
| **Industrial Engineering** | | | | |
| Bodycote | 766½ | +2½ | 773½ | 460½ |
| Hill & Smith | 2330 | -30 | 2365 | 1530 |
| IMI | 2688 | +8 | 2702 | 1606 |
| Morgan Crucible | 236½ | -½ | 274 | 177½ |
| Northgate | 379½ | -1 | 395 | 273½ |
| Rotork | 347 | +3½ | 352 | 275¾ |
| Spirax-Sarco | 7185 | -70 | 8190 | 5445 |
| Vesuvius | 429½ | -1½ | 439¼ | 313¾ |
| Weir Group | 3088 | +20 | 3088 | 1984 |
| Xaar | 108 | -1 | 145 | 59 |
| **Industrial Metals & Mining** | | | | |
| Castings | 267 | -5½ | 319 | 234 |
| Evraz | | | | |
| Ferrexpo | 72¾ | +2¾ | 110¾ | 44¼ |
| **Industrial Transportation** | | | | |
| Braemar Shipping Serv | 227 | +2 | 278 | 201 |
| Clarkson | 4160 | | 4505 | 2995 |
| FirstGroup | 188½ | | 233 | 146½ |
| Fisher (J) & Sons | 372 | -7 | 403 | 285 |
| **Leisure Goods** | | | | |
| Games Workshop | 18770# | -230 | 19840 | 12410 |
| Photo-Me Intl. | 139¾ | +4½ | 230 | 132 |
| **Life Insurance** | | | | |
| Aviva | 675½ | -3½ | 692½ | 491¾ |
| Chesnara | 299½ | -2½ | 304 | 212¾ |
| Legal & General | 265¾ | -¼ | 267 | 215¼ |
| Phoenix Group | 740½ | -4½ | 746 | 499¼ |
| Prudential | 1182½ | -2½ | 1195½ | 624¾ |
| **Media** | | | | |
| 4imprint Group | 4430 | +50 | 6030 | 3035 |
| Bloomsbury Publish. | 504 | -5 | 672 | 468 |
| Future | 514# | +3 | 1029 | 508 |
| Informa | 889½ | -4¾ | 993½ | 640¼ |
| ITV | 80¾ | -½ | 87¾ | 66¼ |
| Pearson | 939 | -39½ | 1379 | 934 |
| Reach | 57½ | +1½ | 88¼ | 53 |
| STV Group | 117 | +2¾ | 203 | 103 |
| Wilmington Group | 295 | | 387 | 289 |
| WPP Group | 315½ | -6½ | 787¾ | 269 |
| **Mining** | | | | |
| Anglo American | 3240 | -80 | 3320 | 2003¾ |

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| COMPANY | CLOSE | +/- | 52 WEEK HIGH | 52 WEEK LOW |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Anglo Pacific | 129¾# | -1½ | 135 | 50 |
| Antofagasta | 3560 | -105 | 3665 | 1383 |
| BHP Billiton | 2419 | -56 | 2475 | 1609½ |
| Endeavour Mining | 3996 | -110 | 4152 | 1514 |
| Fresnillo | 3746 | -8 | 3788 | 657 |
| Gem Diamonds | 3 | | 12 | 2¾ |
| Glencore | 478½ | -12½ | 491 | 230 |
| Hochschild Mining | 585½ | -2 | 592 | 168 |
| Kenmare Res. | 269 | +9½ | 436 | 227 |
| Petra Diamonds | 17½ | -½ | 30½ | 10½ |
| Rio Tinto | 6347 | -121 | 6468 | 4117 |
| **Mobile Telecommunications** | | | | |
| Vodafone Group | 100¾# | | 103¾ | 64 |
| **Nonequity Investment Instruments** | | | | |
| Oryx Int.Gwth. | 1285 | +52½ | 1392½ | 1042½ |
| Rights &Iss.Inc | 2060 | +40 | 2220 | 1670 |
| **Nonlife Insurance** | | | | |
| Admiral Group | | | | |
| Beazley Group | 820 | +1 | 973 | 769 |
| Hiscox | 1389 | -8 | 1429 | 1035 |
| Lancashire | 600 | -2 | 694 | 523 |
| **Oil & Gas Producers** | | | | |
| BP | 440¼ | +2¼ | 476¼ | 331¾ |
| Cairn Energy | 226 | -1 | 331½ | 183 |
| Enquest | 11¾ | +¼ | 16½ | 9¾ |
| Gulf Keystone Pet. | 186½ | +4 | 224½ | 148¾ |
| Harbour Energy | 211¾ | +4¼ | 294 | 151¼ |
| Shell | 2752½ | +6 | 2931½ | 2291½ |
| Soco International | 21½# | +½ | 27½ | 18 |
| Tullow Oil | 7¼ | | 23 | 4 |
| **Oil Equipment, Services & Distribution** | | | | |
| Hunting | 410 | -7 | 420¾ | 246½ |
| John Wood Group | 26¼ | | 72½ | 17¼ |
| **Personal Goods** | | | | |
| Burberry Group | 1272 | -16½ | 1371½ | 627¾ |
| PZ Cussons | 70½ | -2½ | 88¼ | 66 |
| Unilever | 4761½ | -19 | 6177½ | 4631 |
| **Pharmaceuticals & Biotechnology** | | | | |
| AstraZeneca | 14052 | +26 | 14346 | 9667 |
| Genus | 2835 | +205 | 3050 | 1548 |
| GlaxoSmithKline | 1816½ | -31½ | 1901½ | 1264 |
| Haleon | 364 | +1¾ | 415¼ | 326½ |
| Hikma | 1570 | +8 | 2340 | 1507 |
| Ovoca Gold | 1¼ | | | |
| Oxford Biomedica | 899 | -14 | 962 | 232½ |
| **Real Estate Investment & Services** | | | | |
| Boot (Henry) | 223 | +4 | 237 | 196 |
| Cardiff Property | 2700# | | 2800 | 2540 |
| CLS Holdings | 62¾ | +3 | 75 | 53½ |
| Foxtons | 53 | -½ | 68¼ | 52¼ |
| Harworth Group | 165½ | -½ | 189½ | 159½ |
| Mountview Est. | 9000 | -50 | 10200 | 8700 |
| Panther Secs. | 290 | | 320 | 280 |
| Rightmove | 515¼ | -2½ | 823¾ | 504½ |
| Savills | 1094 | -14 | 1110 | 871 |
| Wynnstay Props. | 875 | | 875 | 695 |
| **Real Estate Investment Trusts** | | | | |
| Big Yellow Group | 1076# | | 1180 | 848 |
| British Land | 410¼ | +6 | 420½ | 321¼ |
| Capital & Counties | 144½ | | 161¼ | 113½ |
| Derwent London | 1898 | +13 | 2096 | 1608 |
| Grainger | 194½# | -½ | 228 | 177½ |
| Great Portland Est. | 347 | +8 | 363 | 262 |
| Hammerson | 340¾ | -1¼ | 350 | 220½ |
| Helical Bar | 185¼ | -2½ | 240 | 171¾ |
| Land Securities | 650 | +8½ | 652 | 499½ |
| London & Stamford Prop | 204 | +1½ | 204¾ | 170½ |
| Primary Health | 104½ | | 105¼ | 87½ |
| SEGRO | 747½ | -3¾ | 754¼ | 599 |
| Town Centre | 121½ | +½ | 149 | 117 |
| Unite Group | 583 | +4 | 879½ | 510 |
| Value & Income | 204# | +3 | 215 | 173 |
| Workspace Group | 419# | -½ | 478½ | 362 |
| **Software & Computer Services** | | | | |
| Computacenter | 3148 | -14 | 3212 | 2080 |
| Intec Telecom | | | | |
| Microgen | 296 | +1½ | 344 | 255 |
| Moneysupermarket | 189 | +½ | 221½ | 180½ |
| Pendragon | 351½ | -2 | 558 | 296 |
| RELX | 3094 | -29 | 4135 | 2972 |
| Sage Group | 1054# | +14½ | 1348 | 1024½ |
| Triad Group | 245 | | 400 | 240 |

| COMPANY | CLOSE | +/- | 52 WEEK HIGH | 52 WEEK LOW |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Support Services** | | | | |
| Ashtead Group | 5302# | -22 | 5594 | 3659 |
| Capita Group | 392½ | -3 | 407½ | 175 |
| DCC | 4478 | -26 | 5600 | 4350 |
| Diploma | 5685# | +20 | 5725 | 3624 |
| Essentra | 103½ | +6¼ | 126¼ | 89¾ |
| Experian Group | 3296# | -34 | 4088 | 3091 |
| Ferguson | 18760# | +80 | 19470 | 11670 |
| Hays | 46½ | -¾ | 88¼ | 46¼ |
| Intertek Group | 4582 | -38 | 5385 | 4064 |
| Johnson Service | 141½ | +½ | 159½ | 124 |
| London Security | 2850 | | 3800 | 2750 |
| Macfarlane Group | 71½ | +1½ | 120½ | 62¾ |
| Mears Group | 346 | -12 | 417½ | 311½ |
| Michael Page | 209 | +½ | 341¼ | 205¾ |
| Mitie Group | 170# | +¼ | 171½ | 112 |
| Norish | 18¾ | | 18¾ | 14 |
| Paypoint | 489 | -4½ | 853 | 438½ |
| Rentokil Initial | 464½ | +1¾ | 473½ | 309½ |
| Robert Walters | 129 | | 315 | 116 |
| RS Group | 648½ | -7 | 681½ | 487¼ |
| Serco Group | 295 | -½ | 297½ | 150 |
| SIG | 9¾ | | 18 | 8½ |
| Smiths News | 68½# | -¼ | 77½ | 47½ |
| Speedy Hire | 24¾# | -½ | 32¼ | 18 |
| SThree | 182¾ | -4 | 289½ | 137½ |
| Travis Perkins | 661½ | -16½ | 714 | 494 |
| Trifast | 77 | -2¾ | 87½ | 59 |
| Vitec Group | 13 | +1¼ | 130¾ | 11 |
| **Technology Hardware & Equipment** | | | | |
| BATM Advanced | 15½ | | 19¾ | 13 |
| **Tobacco** | | | | |
| British Amer.Tob | 4326# | -13 | 4421 | 2911 |
| Imperial Brands | 3044 | -19 | 3312 | 2597 |
| **Travel & Leisure** | | | | |
| 888 Holdings | 24¼ | -½ | 74 | 21 |
| Carnival | 2164 | -54 | 2406 | 1134 |
| Celtic | 200 | +5 | 210 | 142½ |
| Compass Group | 2291# | +10 | 2843 | 2275 |
| Domino's Pizza | 182 | +½ | 302¾ | 167¼ |
| EasyJet | 485 | +1 | 587¾ | 427½ |
| Entain | 703 | -23¾ | 1022 | 501¼ |
| Flutter Entert. | 14455 | -665 | 23630 | 14415 |
| Fuller Smith & Turner | 730 | +6 | 740 | 508 |
| Heavitree | 220 | | 280 | 200 |
| InterContinental Htl | 10316¼ | +112 | 10510½ | 5548 |
| Intl Consolidated Airlines | 410½ | -½ | 437 | 224½ |
| Irish Continental Uts | 560 | | 575 | 380 |
| Marston's | 65 | +½ | 67 | 33¼ |
| Mitchells & Butlers | 276 | -3 | 291½ | 208½ |
| National Express | 22½ | -¾ | 78 | 21 |
| Rank Group | 98 | -1 | 160½ | 78 |
| Saga | 414½ | -1½ | 438 | 114 |
| Wetherspoon (JD) | 755 | -2 | 804 | 541 |
| Whitbread | 2782 | +2 | 3274 | 2335 |
| **AIM** | | | | |
| Alumasc Group | 247½ | | 395 | 232 |
| Arbuthnot Banking | 880 | | 1100 | 837½ |
| Boohoo | 22 | | 30½ | 10½ |
| Camellia | 4965 | -10 | 6050 | 4090 |
| Churchill China | 335 | +5 | 710 | 320 |
| CML Microsystems | 265 | | 335 | 210 |
| Colefax Group | 990 | | 998¾ | 750 |
| CPP Group | 81½ | | 162 | 68½ |
| Cropper (James) | 378 | -12 | 400 | 132½ |
| Falkland Islands | 251# | +1 | 316¾ | 162½ |
| Fevertree Drinks | 885 | -13 | 998 | 644½ |
| Filtronic | 192 | +2 | 195 | 82½ |
| James Halstead | 138 | -½ | 181½ | 133 |
| Mothercare | 2 | | 4¼ | 2 |
| Mpac Group | 337½ | | 586 | 270 |
| Naked Wine | 75 | -½ | 93½ | 43 |
| Nichols | 1000 | -20 | 1465 | 930 |
| Northamber | 31# | -½ | 34 | 26¼ |
| Portmeirion | 98½ | | 189 | 94 |
| Regal Petroleum | 16 | | 24 | 14½ |
| Rockhopper Exploratn | 70 | +3 | 87¾ | 33¼ |
| Ten Alps | 47½ | +1 | 73 | 46½ |
| Titon Holdings | 92½ | | 97½ | 69 |
| Volex | 434 | -9 | 443 | 198¾ |
| Young & Co Brewery A. | 828 | +18 | 992 | 714 |

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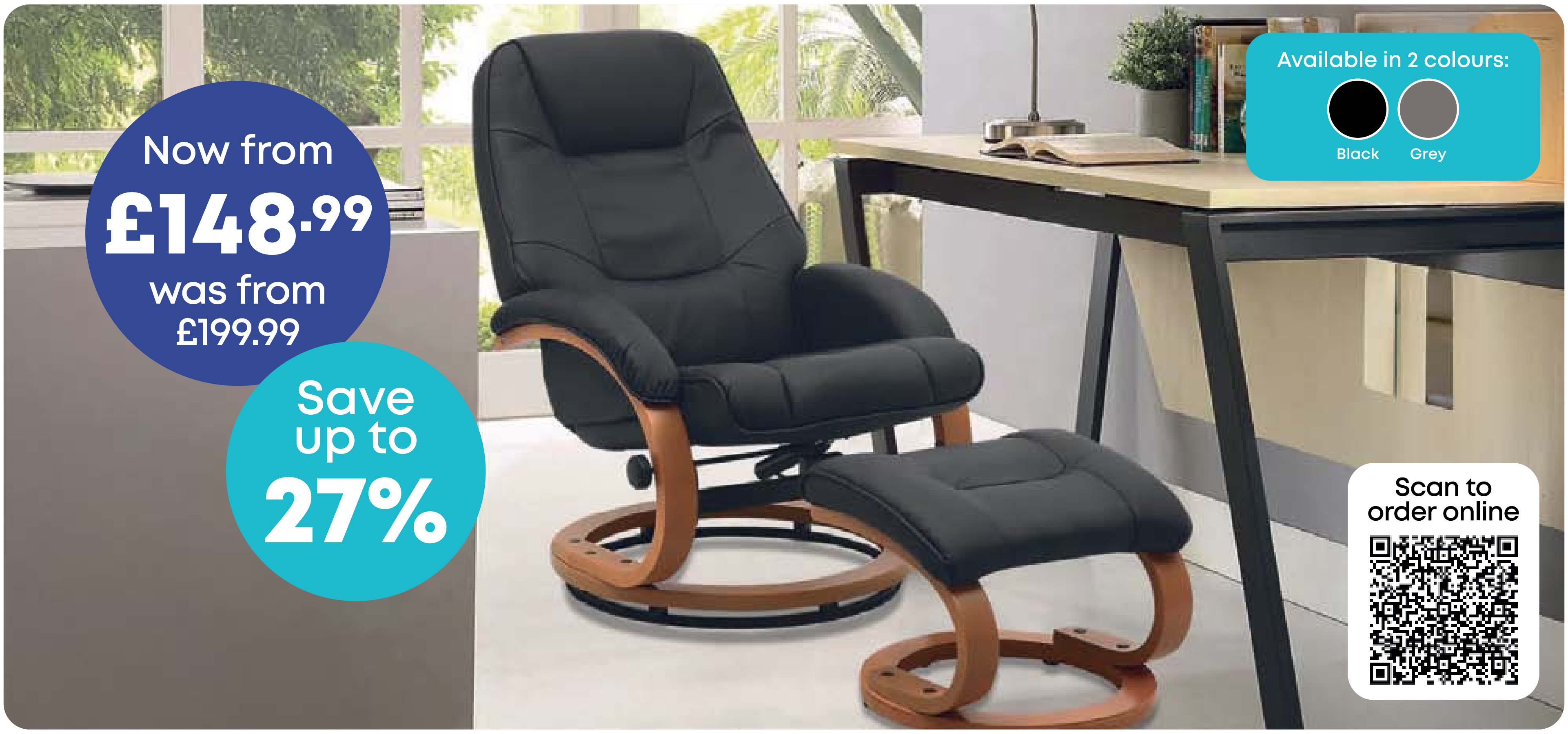

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>
> ★★★★★
>
> **Peter**

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- ✓ Manual recline function
- ✓ Upholstered in soft, durable faux leather
- ✓ Self-assembly required
- ✓ Dimensions: H103.5 x W71 x D76 cm

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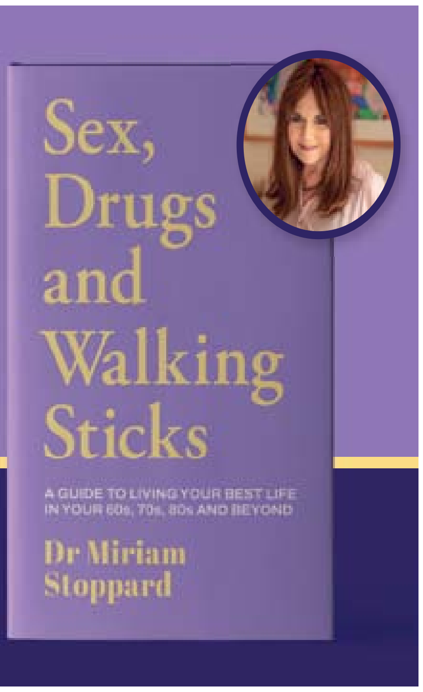
by Dr Miriam Stoppard



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# Racing

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# TEMP HOTS UP

## Mullins' star to have the measure of Jonbon again

**IL STEP ON IT**
Il Etait Temps can score a 10th win from 12 starts

**THE SCOUT**
**MELISSA JONES**
Britain's top tipster

**GREY galloper IL ETAIT TEMPS (3.30, nb) is fancied to strike in the Grade One BetMGM Clarence House Chase at Ascot today.**

The Willie Mullins-trained high achiever has seven wins and two places to his name from just nine starts over the bigger obstacles.

He heads to Berkshire on the back of a career best, a drubbing of 10-time top-flight winner **Jonbon** in the Tingle Creek Chase at Sandown.

The pair and **Gidleigh Park** might have to take a lead early on from Dan Skelton's runaway improver **Thistle Ask**, with a strong pace only benefitting Il Etait Temps.

Jeremy Scott's jumper **CAME FROM NOWHERE** (2.53) can continue his progression in the BetMGM Holloway's Handicap Hurdle.

The son of Shirocco benefited from a first-time tongue tie at Hereford 28 days ago, travelling well and putting the result beyond doubt from the home turn.

It looked a decent race for the grade and a 7lb rise might underestimate this sizeable sort, progressive since he returned to full training after an injury.

Following two solid showings in the big handicaps in the first half of Cheltenham's season, **VINCENZO** (2.20) is tipped to turn silver into gold in the bet365 Handicap Chase.

The step back to a trip of almost two miles is likely to count against talented mare **Nurse Susan** in the Grade Two BetMGM Warfield Mares' Hurdle.

Novice **LA CONQUIERE** (1.40) is backed to capitalise, as Le Havre's daughter showed a smart gear change to reel in subsequent two-time scorer Dream Shadow at Uttoxeter in October.

The Jamie Snowden-saddled, left, selection was only just beaten in this grade in a bumper at Aintree's Grand National meeting, which has produced multiple winners and she is open to plenty more improvement.

At Haydock, there's no doubting **KONFUSION** (2.00, Nap) in the feature Sky Bet Peter Marsh Handicap Chase, who lines up against two-time titleholder **Royale Pagaille**.

The eight-year-old has developed into a really smart performer, brushing off a 10lb rise in Wetherby's Rowland Meyrick Handicap Chase and a further 9lb should not stop him if he's in the same sort of form.

Recently sidelined Nico de Boinville hopes to get back in business riding odds-on shot **Old Park Star** in the Grade Two Sky Bet Supreme Trial Rossington Main Novices' Hurdle, a race Nicky Henderson targets.

**JAPETUS** (1.25) is an each-way play at 14-1, as he is able to quicken and had useful type Kings Champion well behind when he did well in the circumstances starting out over flights at Market Rasen.

Konfusion's co-trainers Sue Smith and Joel Parkinson have another good chance with the lightly-weighted **HEATHER HONEY** (2.35).

## LINGFIELD SKYSPORTSRACING

### THE SCOUT

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 11.30 | Lord Mayor | 1.55 | Factual |
| 12.05 | Karismatique | 2.30 | Watermelon Sugar |
| 12.40 | Zoulu Chief | 3.05 | Alashos |
| 1.15 | Sky Safari | 3.40 | TOMMY'S PROMISE (trb) |

### 11.30 MIDNITE: BUILT FOR 2026 HANDICAP3YO
**£4,397 (Class 5) 1m 2f (5 declared)**

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | (4) | 623- | **DOUBLE COMBO (40) (T)** | H Palmer 9-9 | **T Marquand** | 67 |
| 2 | (2) | 9L5- | **MORBEH (40) (F)** | R Varian 9-5 | **J Mitchell** | 66 |
| 3 | (5) | 093- | **● LORD MAYOR (31)** | A Balding 9-3 | **O Murphy** | 73 |
| 4 | (3) | 77613-3 | **SNAAFY (11)** | D Loughnane 9-3 | **H Doyle** | 75 |
| 5 | (1) | 54613-2 | **ONYEISI (8) (D) (T)** | C Johnston 8-13 | **B Loughnane** | ★76 |

**BLINKERS: No. 5.**

**SP FORECAST:** 9-4 Onyeisi, 3 Double Combo, 4 Lord Mayor, 9-2 Morbeh, 5 Snaafy.

**2025: No corresponding race.**

### 12.05 JOIN THE MIDNITE MOVEMENT HANDICAP
**£3,768 (6) 1m 7f 169yds (11)**

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | (5) | 13332-7 | **ZOOKS (5)** | I Williams 6 9-9 | **B Loughnane** | 63 |
| 2 | (10) | LL074-4 | **THE CRAFTYMASTER (10) (C&D)** | A Carroll 6 9-9 | **W Carson** | 61 |
| 3 | (8) | 55416-6 | **ARENAS DEL TIEMPO (9)** | J & S Best 8 9-8 | **S M Levey** | 61 |
| 4 | (9) | 6/L4-9 | **MARINE (14)** | G & J Moore 8 9-8 | **R Clutterbuck** | 52 |
| 5 | (3) | 556/84-5 | **GEARING'S POINT (10) (C)** | Miss S West 8 9-6 | **C Bishop** | 64 |
| 6 | (7) | 13384-6 | **FORGLEN (10)** | W Stone 5 9-2 | **J Mitchell** | 63 |
| 7 | (11) | 54019-9 | **FORNIDO (10)** | M Attwater 4 9-1 | **P Bradley** | 59 |
| 8 | (1) | 6LL29-2 | **LUMBERJACK (9)** | M Usher 7 9-1 | **D Keenan** | 62 |
| 9 | (6) | 56624L- | **SMITH (46) (C&D)** | Mrs L Richards 10 9-0 | **R Havlin** | ★65 |
| 10 | (4) | L00544- | **GIRL OF GOLD (J27) (F)** | James Owen 5 9-0 | **L Morris** | 60 |
| 11 | (2) | LL80-35 | **● KARISMATIQUE (3)** | J S Moore 4 8-10 | **H Doyle** | 55 |

**BLINKERS: Nos. 9, 11 VISOR: No. 2 CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 5, 6.**

**SP FORECAST:** 2 Girl Of Gold, 4 The Craftymaster, 13-2 Lumberjack, 15-2 Zooks, 8 Karismatique, 10 Gearing's Point, 12 Forglen, 16 Arenas Del Tiempo, 20 Others.

**2025: No corresponding race.**

### 12.40 MIDNITE, FUTURE OF BETTING HANDICAP
**£9,631 (3) 6f 1yds (7)**

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | (1) | 558074- | **COMPLETELY RANDOM (73) (D)** | Harry Charlton 5 9-9 | **R L Moore** | 100 |
| 2 | (7) | 413/L87- | **BOLO NEIGHS (31) (D)** | R Beckett 4 9-9 | **J Dace(5)** | 97 |
| 3 | (5) | 462321- | **● ZOULU CHIEF (75) (D,F)** | H Main 5 9-6 | **B Loughnane** | 99 |
| 4 | (3) | 822111- | **JUSTCALLMEPETE (30) (C&D)** | A Carroll 7 9-2 | **D Costello** | 101 |
| 5 | (2) | 9LL517- | **INTERVENTION (18) (C&D)** | M Appleby 9 9-2 | **Jason Watson** | 100 |
| 6 | (4) | 03/8146- | **DYRHOLAEY (26) (D)** | A Watson 5 9-1 | **H Doyle** | 100 |
| 7 | (6) | 7L202-9 | **PRINCE OF PILLO (16) (C&D) (T)** | R Fahey 6 8-11 | **S Gray** | ★102 |

**BLINKERS: No. 4 CHEEK PIECES: No. 6.**

**SP FORECAST:** 7-4 Completely Random, 9-4 Zoulu Chief, 7-2 Justcallmepete, 12 Dyrholaey, 14 Intervention, 16 Prince Of Pillo, 20 Bolo Neighs.

**2025: No corresponding race.**

### 1.15 BETMGM WINTER OAKS FILLIES' HANDICAP
**£57,574 (2) 1m 2f (10)**

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | (5) | 61/3141- | **MORROPHORE (45) (C&D,S)** | J & T Gosden 5 9-12 | **R L Moore** | 103 |
| 2 | (9) | 12L111- | **● SKY SAFARI (58) (C)** | J Fanshawe 5 9-10 | **D Muscutt** | 102 |
| 3 | (7) | 512253- | **UNASSUMING (22)** | G Boughey 6 9-1 | **B Loughnane** | ★108 |
| 4 | (6) | 31257- | **WUJJOOD (106)** | W Haggas 4 8-13 | **T Marquand** | 102 |
| 5 | (10) | 333311- | **LADY OF ARABIA (26) (D,F)** | E J-Houghton 6 8-8 | **S Osborne** | 104 |
| 6 | (2) | 331414- | **TRUE COLORS (45)** | M Botti 4 8-5 | **H Doyle** | 104 |
| 7 | (3) | 41792-2 | **KIMEKO GLORY (14) (D)** | C Hills 4 8-2 | **L Morris** | 105 |
| 8 | (8) | 53/414L- | **THANKYOU BARONESS (122)** | Mrs I G-Leveque 5 8-2 | **T Heard** | 100 |
| 9 | (4) | 431277- | **AIMING HIGH (26) (C,D)** | D M Simcock 7 8-2 | **J Dace(5)** | 102 |
| 10 | (1) | L62L35- | **BINT AL DAAR (26) (D)** | K Frost 6 8-2 | **C Hardie** | 100 |

**VISOR: Nos. 5, 10 TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 2, 3 CHEEK PIECES: No. 3 HOOD: No. 9.**

**SP FORECAST:** 11-8 Morrophore, 5-2 Sky Safari, 8 Wujjood, 10 Lady Of Arabia, Unassuming, 14 True Colors, 20 Kimeko Glory, 25 Bint Al Daar, 33 Others.

**2025: Charlotte's Web 4-9-9, Jack Mitchell 5-2 Fav (S & E Crisford), drawn (11), 12 ran.**

### 1.55 BET 10 GET 40 BETMGM NOVICE STAKES
**£18,039 (2) 7f 1yds (8)**

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | (3) | 1- | **PINATUBO'S LEGACY (52) (D)** | T Kent 4 10-8 | **B Loughnane** | 67 |
| 2 | (8) | 1-1 | **JUNGLE RULER (14) (D)** | M Appleby 3 9-8 | **Jason Watson** | ★72 |
| 3 | (7) | 1- | **● FACTUAL (221)** | A Balding 3 9-4 | **O Murphy** | 70 |
| 4 | (4) | | **ALL YOU CAN BE** | C Hills 3 8-12 | **M Ghiani** | – |
| 5 | (6) | | **BENNYWORTH** | James Owen 3 8-12 | **P Cosgrave** | – |
| 6 | (2) | | **CHARLES DARNAY** | James Owen 3 8-12 | **R Havlin** | – |
| 7 | (5) | 42- | **NORTHERN EMPIRE (26) (F)** | E Walker 3 8-12 | **T Marquand** | 71 |
| 8 | (1) | 77- | **BEAR STEPS (106)** | Jack Jones 3 8-7 | **H Doyle** | 44 |

**SP FORECAST:** 9-4 Jungle Ruler, 3 Factual, 9-2 Northern Empire, 13-2 Pinatubo's Legacy, 8 All You Can Be, 10 Bennyworth, 14 Charles Darnay, 33 Bear Steps.

**2025: Humam 3-9-1, Jason Watson Evens Fav (A Balding), drawn (3), 6 ran.**

### 2.30 MIDNITE HANDICAP (DIV 1)
**£3,768 (6) 6f 1yds (9)**

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | (3) | 1-81113 | **GOGO YUBARI (3) (C&D)** | A Carroll 5 10-10(5ex) | **J Dace(5)** | 64 |
| 2 | (8) | 951L7-4 | **HARRY BROWN (10) (C&D)** | P Crate 6 9-8 | **D Keenan** | 69 |
| 3 | (1) | L00051- | **● WATERMELON SUGAR (26) (C&D,F)** | C Banham 7 9-8 | **J Haynes** | ★71 |
| 4 | (4) | 85L9L-L | **GRISELDA (14) (D)** | Miss H Knight 4 9-7 | **H Doyle** | 57 |
| 5 | (9) | L13712- | **PINJARRA (38) (D,F) (T)** | J & S Quinn 5 9-6 | **B Loughnane** | 69 |
| 6 | (6) | 25614-4 | **SOUTHBANK (10) (D)** | C Gordon 5 9-5 | **C Bishop** | 69 |
| 7 | (2) | 0L/L993- | **HAZIYM (31) (D)** | A Carroll 7 9-5 | **M Ghiani** | 70 |
| 8 | (7) | 445668- | **RUMBA BAY (98) (D)** | P Evans 4 9-4 | **P Cosgrave** | 66 |
| 9 | (5) | 6009-53 | **PORFIN (7) (C&D)** | P McEntee 8 8-9 | **C Planas(3)** | 66 |

**BLINKERS: Nos. 2, 5 CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 4, 9.**

**SP FORECAST:** 9-4 Pinjarra, 10-3 Watermelon Sugar, 7-2 Gogo Yubari, 15-2 Haziym, 10 Southbank, Harry Brown, 16 Porfin, 20 Rumba Bay, 50 Griselda.

**2025: No corresponding race.**

### 3.05 MIDNITE HANDICAP (DIV 2)
**£3,768 (6) 6f 1yds (8)**

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | (8) | 81L1-74 | **UP THE ANTI (3) (D)** | A Carroll 4 9-9 | **W Carson** | 68 |
| 2 | (5) | 6L3235- | **BLUEBELLS BOY (26) (C&D)** | Hayley Burton 7 9-8 | **L Morris** | 69 |
| 3 | (2) | 13738-3 | **EM JAY KAY (4) (D)** | P McEntee 7 9-8 | **B Loughnane** | 67 |
| 4 | (7) | 23467-6 | **DARK SUN (15) (F)** | J Bennett 5 9-7 | **Laura Coughlan(3)** | ★72 |
| 5 | (1) | L58207- | **LADY KAMEKO (40)** | S Pearce 4 9-6 | **R Clutterbuck** | 71 |
| 6 | (3) | 238554- | **● ALASHOS (45) (D)** | C Gordon 4 9-5 | **C Bishop** | 68 |
| 7 | (6) | 6/5LLL-L | **FITZMAURICE (10)** | C Poulton 4 9-4 | **T Heard** | 60 |
| 8 | (4) | L4469-1 | **EAST TYRONE (11) (D) (T)** | P Kirby 4 9-0 | **C Hardie** | 67 |

**BLINKERS: Nos. 2, 7, 8 TONGUE STRAP: No. 2 CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 3, 6.**

**SP FORECAST:** 3 Em Jay Kay, 7-2 Bluebells Boy, 4 Up The Anti, 9-2 East Tyrone, 11-2 Alashos, 12 Dark Sun, 20 Lady Kameko, 33 Fitzmaurice.

**2025: No corresponding race.**

### 3.40 MIDNITE BETTING APP HANDICAP
**£4,397 (5) 1m 2f (9)**

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | (9) | 14434-4 | **MEET ME IN MERAKI (7) (D)** | P Evans 5 9-12 | **P Cosgrave** | ★78 |
| 2 | (1) | 11995-6 | **LENNY'S SPIRIT (7) (D)** | D P Quinn 8 9-10 | **W Carson** | 73 |
| 3 | (6) | L2763-6 | **EUPATOR (14)** | R Hannon 4 9-10 | **S M Levey** | 75 |
| 4 | (3) | 644- | **DODGING THE BULLET (J31)** | R Bandey 4 9-8 | **G Mangan** | 72 |
| 5 | (8) | 5L/255-7 | **KING'S HAND (14)** | Sir M Prescott 4 9-7 | **L Morris** | 76 |
| 6 | (7) | 2550L3- | **RIYADH GEM (18) (F)** | Faye Bramley 4 9-7 | **C Bishop** | 72 |
| 7 | (5) | 132424- | **BOHEMIAN BREEZE (J90) (D)** | G & J Moore 6 9-6 | **R Clutterbuck** | 75 |
| 8 | (4) | 863111- | **● TOMMY'S PROMISE (26) (C&D,F)** | J Ryan 5 9-4 | **D Keenan** | 73 |
| 9 | (2) | 84L513- | **MUY MUY LOCO (46) (C&D)** | S Dow 4 8-11 | **H Doyle** | 71 |

**BLINKERS: No. 3 TONGUE STRAP: No. 2 CHEEK PIECES: No. 6 HOOD: Nos. 5, 9.**

**SP FORECAST:** 2 Tommy's Promise, 10-3 Meet Me In Meraki, 6 Muy Muy Loco, 15-2 Riyadh Gem, 8 King's Hand, 12 Bohemian Breeze, 14 Eupator, 16 Lenny's Spirit, 20 Dodging The Bullet.

**2025: No corresponding race.**

**TRACK FACTS: GOING:** Standard. Left Handed. **TOP TRACK JOCKEY (2021-26):** Luke Morris 10% Strike rate. **TOP TRACK TRAINER (2021-26):** G & J Moore 15% Strike rate. **FIRST TIME:** 1.15 Bint Al Daar (visor), Unassuming (cheek pieces, tongue strap), 3.40 King's Hand (hood), 12.05 Gearing's Point (cheek pieces), 12.40 Dyrholaey (cheek pieces). **BEATEN FAVOURITES:** 12.40 Completely Random(hcp). 1.15 Unassuming(hcp). 2.30 Gogo Yubari(hcp). 3.05 Bluebells Boy(hcp). 3.40 King's Hand(hcp). **DRAW:** Little effect. **LONGEST TRAVELLER: East Tyrone** (3.05) 279 miles. **STABLE SWITCH:** No Qualifiers.

### WOLVERHAMPTON: Standard

**5.00—MAGIC RUNNER** (Taryn Langley, 16-1) 1; Francesi (9-2) 2; Stipulation (10-3 2nd fav) 3. H'cap 9 ran. 1l, nk. (R Carr; 13-8 fav Seraphic). Tote: £19.40; pl £3.30, £1.30, £1.50. exacta: £86.70. tricast: £305.36. trifecta: £895.70. CSF: £87.00.

**5.30—LATIN** (P Bradley, 16-5 fav) 1; Imola (7-2) 2; The Dark Baron (10-3 2nd fav) 3. H'cap 8 ran. shd, 2¾l. (James Owen). Tote: £4.50; pl £1.40, £1.50, £1.30. exacta: £17.60. tricast: £39.56. trifecta: £50.00. CSF: £15.04.

**6.00—MYTHICAL BAY** (C Hutchinson, 2-5 fav) 1; Felix Gem (3-1 2nd fav) 2; Kindly Queen (6-1) 3. 5 ran. nk, 3½l. (A Balding). Tote: £1.40; pl £1.10, £1.40. exacta: £1.80. trifecta: £3.20. CSF: £2.03.

## EVENING RESULTS

**6.30—PIPERSTOWN** (O Stammers, 11-2) 1; Nordic Glory (11-2) 2; Some Nightmare (13-2) 3. H'cap 9 ran. 2l, 1¼l. (K Frost; 3-1 fav Autumn Angel). Tote: £7.30; pl £2.00, £1.30, £2.70. exacta: £47.00. tricast: £205.11. trifecta: £359.50. CSF: £36.87. Non-runners: Bossy Parker, Forever Noah, Rogue Thunder.

**7.00—PALADIN** (O Stammers, 33-1) 1; Hitched (9-1) 2; Epictetus (15-2) 3. H'cap 9 ran. hd, ½l. (K Frost; 4-7 fav Advancing). Tote: £34.00; pl £4.90, £1.80, £2.00. exacta: £287.80. tricast: £2512.16. trifecta: £1461.70. CSF: £309.38. Non-runner: Mr Baloo.

**7.30—ICE OPERA** (F Marsh, 22-1) 1; Dancing Bay (33-1) 2; Ignition (7-1) 3. 9 ran. 3½l, ½l. (G Harris; 5-6 fav Break Point). Tote: £28.90; pl £4.90, £9.40, £2.20. exacta: £457.20. trifecta: £3538.80. CSF: £552.18.

**8.00—HAVACHOC** (P Bradley, 9-2) 1; Warrior Lion (5-2 2nd fav) 2; Highfield Comrade (5-4 fav) 3. 8 ran. 6l, nk. (P Morris). Tote: £5.50; pl £2.00, £1.40, £1.10. exacta: £19.00. trifecta: £67.70. CSF: £16.50.

**8.30—ROGUE DE VEGA** (C Hardie, 7-4 fav) 1; Colors Of Freedom (9-4 2nd fav) 2; Sultan Of Oj (9-1) 3. H'cap 7 ran. ½l, 1l. (A Brittain). Tote: £2.75; pl £1.80, £1.80. exacta: £6.40. tricast: £24.19. trifecta: £30.60. CSF: £5.94. Non-runner: Henery Hawk.

**Placepot: £605.40**

**(Race 1) 8, 1, 3; (2) 1, 7, 6; (3) 2, 1; (4) 8, 3, 1; (5) 6, 8, 3; (6) 3, 8, 9;**

**Quadpot: £128.70**

## No Fuss as Tom wins

By **David Yates**

**TOM DASCOMBE went back to his roots to claim the biggest prize of the Berkshire Winter Million fixture's opening day as Hot Fuss landed the Fitzdares Sovereign Handicap Hurdle at Windsor.**

**Former jump jockey Dascombe is better known for his training exploits on the Flat, but showed he can turn his hand to the winter code as 10-1 chance Hot Fuss and David Bass got the better of 85-40 favourite Wilful by two and three-quarter lengths.**

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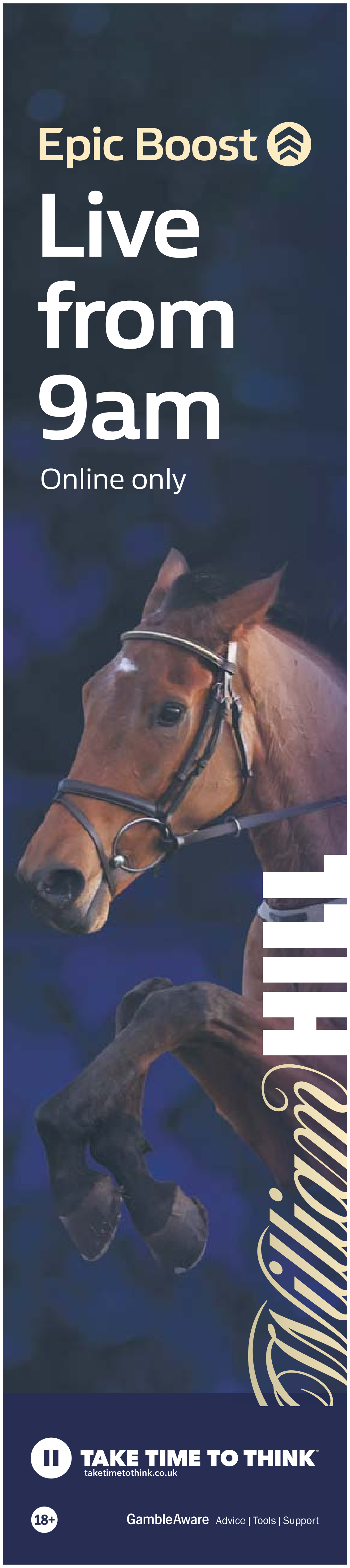
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# Sam is the man for Nicholls

By **David Yates**

PAUL NICHOLLS has turned to former Ditcheat stable jockey Sam Twiston-Davies to fill the void left by Harry Cobden in next season's Grade One races.

After spending four years as Nicholls' retained rider, Twiston-Davies, 33, went freelance in 2018, with Cobden taking over in the Manor Farm Stables hot seat.

But Cobden's new job with JP McManus has left a void and Nicholls, above, currently holidaying in Barbados, has moved to secure Twiston-Davies' services at Grade One level.

"When he gets back, we're going to sit down and have a chat and try to work out how it's all going to work," said the jockey, regularly in demand with the Grange Hill Farm establishment run by his father Nigel and brother Willy, and with trainers Anthony Honeyball and Henry Daly.

"Paul knows my CV well – he practically created it!

"And, when you look at the Grade One picture, it's nice to be throwing your hat back in the ring." After departing from his role with Nichols, Twiston-Davies linked up with the 14-time champion trainer's Clan Des Obeaux for the gelding's second King George VI Chase success in 2019, landing the Punchestown Gold Cup in the same horse two years later.

"We went our separate ways and Harry Cobden came into the role and I came back home," he added.

"We never fell out and we still have a good relationship in everything we do.

"When I see him at the races, we still have a chat and a catch up and talk about everything."

HE'S BACK: Sam Twiston-Davies won the 2019 King George on Clan Des Obeaux

## THE SCOUT

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 12.25 | Down To Business | 2.53 | Came From Nowhere |
| 1.00 | In d'Or | 3.30 | IL ETAIT TEMPS (nb) |
| 1.40 | La Conquiere | 4.05 | The Burren Man |
| 2.20 | Vincenzo | | |

JACKPOT: www.totepoolliveinfo.com

## 12.25 BETMGM JUVENILE HURDLE 4YO
£13,615 (Class 3)1m 7f 157yds (10 dec)

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 22 | **BRAVE GUEST (21)** Miss S West 11-0 | **M Goldstein** | **118** |
| 2 | 3 | ● **DOWN TO BUSINESS (31)** D Skelton 11-0 | **H Skelton** | **112** |
| 3 | F | **ELMAN (22) (T)** D Hogan (IRE) 11-0 | **J J Burke** | **–** |
| 4 | 57F | **ENZIYA (18)** K Pickard 11-0 | **Paul O'Brien** | **102** |
| 5 | | **FLASH MAN (F64)** T Lawes 11-0 | **T Cannon** | **–** |
| 6 | 8 | **GENEALOGY (21) (T)** D Hogan (IRE) 11-0 | **S Twiston-Davies** | **107** |
| 7 | 3-446 | **MACSHADOW DES CRAI (35)** N Henderson 11-0 | **J Bowen** | **117** |
| 8 | | **NOVELISTA (F106)** W Greatrex 11-0 | **H Bannister** | **–** |
| 9 | | **TALAKAN (F68)** T Lawes 11-0 | **K Brogan** | **–** |
| 10 | 22 | **WINSTON JUNIOR (35) (F)** Faye Bramley 11-0 | **H Cobden** | **★131** |

**TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 2, 3, 4 CHEEK PIECES: No. 4.**

**SP FORECAST:** 6-4 Winston Junior, 3 Down To Business, 9-2 Novelista, 8 Brave Guest, 10 Macshadow Des Crai, 16 Talakan, 20 Elman, 25 Genealogy, 33 Others.

**2025: Lulamba 11-10, Nico De Boinville 4-5 Fav (N Henderson), 7 ran.**

## 1.00 BETMGM HANDICAP CHASE
£10,562 (3) 2m 7f 185yds (11)

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 112/95-L | **OUTLAW PETER (72)** P Nicholls 10 12-0 | **F Gingell** | **131** |
| 2 | 6312-13 | **ISSAM (28)** T Symonds 8 12-0 | **G Sheehan** | **140** |
| 3 | 8/4L2-61 | **WELCOM TO CARTRIES (43) (D)** P Nicholls 8 11-11 | **H Cobden** | **137** |
| 4 | L1136-3 | ● **IN D'OR (43) (C&D)** F O'Brien 8 11-11 | **J J Burke** | **138** |
| 5 | 1/1L-14 | **THE JUKEBOX KID (35)** B Pauling 7 11-7 | **B R Jones** | **★141** |
| 6 | 6-72713 | **KAP VERT (21)** P Hobbs & J White 6 11-4 | **Sean Houlihan** | **139** |
| 7 | 155FP/L- | **CHAVEZ (386)** V Williams 10 11-4 | **J Bowen** | **–** |
| 8 | 11L3-42 | **LAGANHILL (49)** H Daly 8 11-3 | **S Twiston-Davies** | **137** |
| 9 | 1224-27 | **EYED (49) (D)** H Morrison 9 11-0 | **T Cannon** | **139** |
| 10 | 3PP-11P | **MONTREGARD (21) (C&D)** T Lacey 7 10-13 | **S Sheppard** | **139** |
| 11 | 2711-P3 | **MINELLA BLUEWAY (42) (D)** E Williams 8 10-11 | **Isabel Williams** | **139** |

**VISOR: No. 10 TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 1, 2, 3, 9 CHEEK PIECES: No. 11. SOFT/HEAVY WINNERS: Nos. 7, 9, 4, 2, 6, 8, 11, 10, 1.**

**SP FORECAST:** 11-4 The Jukebox Kid, 7-2 Welcom To Cartries, 6 In d'Or, Laganhill, 10 Kap Vert, Issam, 12 Eyed, 14 Montregard, 16 Others.

**2025: In d'Or 7-10-13, Mr D Maxwell 2-1 (V Williams), 5 ran.**

## 1.40 WARFIELD MARES' HURDLE (GRD 2) ITV1
£34,170 (1) 1m 7f 157yds (5)

1 169-229 **JOYEUSE (28) (D,F)** 7 11 6....**J Bowen★150**
Runs: 10 Wins: 3(S,G) Places: 1 £117,611
Trainer: N Henderson Owner: Mr John P McManus

2 1/09-911 **NURSE SUSAN (14) (D)** 9 11 6....**H Skelton 143**
Runs: 12 Wins: 6(S,GS,G) Places: 1 £114,556
Trainer: D Skelton Owner: Mr Colm Donlon

3 **22-11** ● **LA CONQUIERE (49) (D)** 7 11 4...**G Sheehan 142**
Runs: 4 Wins: 2(S,G) Places: 2 £43,454
Trainer: J Snowden Owner: Spurrier, Slemeck, Henriques & Co

4 303-000 **OOH BETTY (37) (D)** 8 11 2....**B R Jones 146**
Runs: 25 Wins: 6(GS,G) Places: 7 £83,643
Trainer: Ben Clarke Owner: Butler, Langford, Paterson & Tory

5 61F-314 **SUNSET MARQUESA (14) (D)** 7 11 2..**B J Powell 143**
Runs: 12 Wins: 4(S,GS) Places: 3 £36,643
Trainer: J Tizzard Owner: The Wychwood Partnership

**TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 4, 5. SOFT/HEAVY WINNERS: Nos. 1, 3, 2, 5.**

**SP FORECAST:** 15-8 La Conquiere, 9-4 Nurse Susan, 4 Joyeuse, 9-2 Sunset Marquesa, 14 Ooh Betty.

**2025: Take No Chances 7-11-6, Kielan Woods 13-2 (D Skelton), 7 ran.**

**GUIDE: Nurse Susan** has clearly been fragile but seems to be fulfilling the potential shown as a novice hurdler having won the same Cheltenham (2m4f, gd-sft) handicap as she did in 2023 (sft) before following up in a Listed event at Sandown (2m4f, gd). That said, she needs to prove herself dropping back to 2m and the exciting **LA CONQUIERE** may well be the answer. Jamie Snowden's mare has clearly benefited from a patient approach and brings an unbeaten record over hurdles to the table after impressing at Newbury (2m, sft) in November. **Joyeuse** has mostly struggled since winning the William Hill Hurdle at Newbury (2m, sft) last February, but it would be no surprise if she bounced back to form.

## ASCOT SKYSPORTSRACING Premier Raceday

## 2.20 BET365 HANDICAP CHASE ITV1
£52,030 (2) 2m 5f 13yds (9)

1 22PL-13 **HITMAN (41)** 10 12 0....**F Gingell 157**
Runs: 30 Wins: 5(S,GS,G) Places: 12 £408,248
Trainer: P Nicholls Owner: Mason, Hogarth, Ferguson & Done

2 41L/1P-L **JUNGLE BOOGIE (16) (C&D)** 12 11 11...**J Bowen 136**
Runs: 9 Wins: 5(S,GS) £74,961
Trainer: V Williams Owner: Mr Malcolm C Denmark

3 41-L2L1 **ETALON (28) (C)** 9 11 4....**H Skelton 156**
Runs: 21 Wins: 6(S,GS) Places: 5 £90,153
Trainer: D Skelton Owner: Mrs Suzanne Lawrence

4 1P5-154 **BAD (28) (D)** 7 11 3....**B R Jones 158**
Runs: 22 Wins: 4(S,GS,G) Places: 7 £133,694
Trainer: B Pauling Owner: Mr D P Howden

5 3608-55 **FUGITIF (36) (D)** 11 10 13....**C Maggs(5) 151**
Runs: 31 Wins: 5(S,GS) Places: 6 £221,248
Trainer: R Hobson Owner: Mr Carl Hinchy & Dr Emad Hussain

6 1212-22 ● **VINCENZO (35)** 8 10 13....**D Johnston★160**
Runs: 15 Wins: 3(S,GS,G) Places: 7 £129,015
Trainer: S Thomas Owner: Walters Plant Hire Ltd

7 021-2P2 **SCARFACE (28) (D)** 9 10 9....**B J Powell 159**
Runs: 31 Wins: 6(S,GS,G) Places: 9 £206,005
Trainer: J Tizzard Owner: K Leggett, S & J Waterworth

8 P8332F **HELTENHAM (22)** 9 10 7....**Harry Atkins(7) 157**
Runs: 30 Wins: 7(S,GS) Places: 9 £191,712
Trainer: D Skelton Owner: Exors Of The Late Mr N W Lake

9 24-4514 **NEON MOON (31) (C&D)** 10 10 5....**H Cobden 155**
Runs: 35 Wins: 9(S,GS,G) Places: 5 £148,100
Trainer: D Pipe Owner: Brocade Racing

**BLINKERS: No. 9 TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 1, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9 CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 1, 3, 5, 7. SOFT/HEAVY WINNERS: Nos. 4, 3, 5, 8, 1, 2, 9, 7, 6.**

**SP FORECAST:** 9-4 Vincenzo, 9-2 Bad, 5 Scarface, 7 Etalon, 8 Hitman, Neon Moon, 14 Fugitif, Heltenham, 20 Jungle Boogie.

**2025: Terresita 8-10-6, Gavin Sheehan 15-2 (L Wadham), 10 ran.**

**GUIDE: VINCENZO** arrives following two fine efforts in defeat at Cheltenham. The Paddy Power (2m4f, sft) saw him bump into what proved a very well-handicapped rival in the shape of Panic Attack before filling the same position the following month (2m5f, gd-sft). Only raised a combined total of 3lb for both runs, Sam Thomas' gelding makes plenty of appeal in his bid to go one better. **Scarface** (second) has every chance of reversing form with **Etalon** from their meeting here last month (2m3f, gd-sft), with both a 4lb pull at the weights and stepping back up in trip positives for the former.

## 2.53 HOLLOWAY'S HANDICAP HURDLE ITV1
£15,609 (2) 2m 3f 63yds (10)

1 16-3U45 **TRIPOLI FLYER (22)** 7 12 0....**Fern O'Brien(5) 141**
Runs: 12 Wins: 4(S,A,GS) Places: 3 £106,495
Trainer: F O'Brien Owner: Mr Ismail El Magdoub

2 526/838 **FAIVOIR (28)** 11 11 6....**H Skelton 140**
Runs: 34 Wins: 11(S,GS,G) Places: 8 £219,123
Trainer: D Skelton Owner: Mrs Suzanne Lawrence

3 17PP0/4 **METIER (42) (C,D)** 10 11 4....**B Carver 124**
Runs: 12 Wins: 4(S) £97,373
Trainer: H Fry Owner: Mr G C Stevens

4 157-L78 **SAMUEL SPADE (29) (C,D)** 7 10 13..**B R Jones 136**
Runs: 22 Wins: 5(S,GS,G) Places: 4 £55,652
Trainer: B Pauling Owner: Mrs Emma Palmer

**TRACK FACTS: GOING:** Good to Soft. Right Handed. **TOP TRACK JOCKEY (2021-26):** Harry Cobden 20% Strike rate. **TOP TRACK TRAINER (2021-26):** P Nicholls 19% Strike rate. **FIRST TIME:** 2.20 Fugitif (wind surgery), 2.53 Metier (cheek pieces, tongue strap), Samuel Spade (cheek pieces), Patriotik (cheek pieces), 4.05 Whiskey Yankee (tongue strap), Minella Marathon (tongue strap), 12.25 Down To Business (tongue strap). **BEATEN FAVOURITES:** 12.25 Down To Business. 1.00 Kap Vert(hcp ch), Outlaw Peter(hcp ch), The Jukebox Kid(hcp ch). 2.20 Bad(hcp ch). 2.53 Marche D'aligre(hcp hdl). 4.05 Uptown Dandy. **LONGEST TRAVELLER: Elman** (12.25) & **Genealogy** (12.25) Ireland; **Came From Nowhere** (2.53) 152 miles. **STABLE SWITCH:** 12.25 **Flash Man** from H Pantall in France to T Lawes, **Novelista** from C Johnston to W Greatrex, **Talakan** from F Graffard in France to T Lawes. 1.00 **Chavez** from W P Mullins in Ireland to V Williams. 4.05 **Tobyshill** from Caroline Mccaldin in Ireland to N & W Twiston-Davies.

5 **1**/33-321 ● **CAME FROM NOWHERE (28)** 7 10 12....**L Williams 139**
Runs: 6 Wins: 2(S) Places: 4 £21,363
Trainer: J Scott Owner: On A Mission

6 443-177 **THANKSFORTHEHELP (16) (D)** 9 10 12...**H Cobden 143**
Runs: 18 Wins: 3(GS) Places: 5 £44,144
Trainer: D Pipe Owner: Mr John P McManus

7 2L2L-22 **MARCHE D'ALIGRE (43)** 5 10 10....**G Sheehan 137**
Runs: 7 Wins: 1(GS) Places: 4 £31,215
Trainer: J Snowden Owner: Billam Roe Swindell Wilson & The Molds

8 13-00LL **PATRIOTIK (21)** 7 10 7....**Isabel Williams 122**
Runs: 18 Wins: 3(S,GS) Places: 5 £48,074
Trainer: E Williams Owner: Mrs Janet Davies

9 3-61141 **SURREY LORD (22)** 7 10 6....**K Brogan 139**
Runs: 10 Wins: 3(S,G) Places: 3 £25,616
Trainer: T Lawes Owner: Surrey Racing (sl)

10 U4-2355 **MOVEIT LIKE MINNIE (28) (D)** 9 10 5 **S Twiston-Davies★145**
Runs: 33 Wins: 7(GS,G) Places: 8 £81,213
Trainer: N & W Twiston-DaviesOwner: Mr F J Mills & Mr W R Mills

**BLINKERS: No. 6 VISOR: No. 10 TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 3, 5, 6, 10 CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 1, 3, 4, 8. SOFT/HEAVY WINNERS: Nos. 5, 2, 3, 8, 4, 9, 1.**

**SP FORECAST:** 11-4 Came From Nowhere, 7-2 Surrey Lord, 11-2 Faivoir, 15-2 Moveit Like Minnie, Tripoli Flyer, 8 Thanksforthehelp, 12 Marche D'aligre, 16 Others.

**2025: Altobelli 7-11-5, Bryan Carver 3-1 (H Fry), 11 ran.**

**GUIDE:** Although Hereford (2m4f, sft) winner **Came From Nowhere** had the beating of **SURREY LORD** (fourth) when runner-up at Wincanton (1m7f, gd-sft) last month, it's quite possible that the form will be reversed over this longer trip. Toby Lawes' gelding went on to score at Kempton (2m5f, gd) on Boxing Day and, whilst the pair should be closely matched, this son of Getaway looks slightly more progressive. **Faivoir** is edging down the handicap and must be respected, as must **Tripoli Flyer**, whose limitations were exposed in the Christmas Hurdle (2m, gd).

## 3.30 CLARENCE HOUSE CHASE (GRD 1) ITV1
£98,472 (1) 2m 172yds (4)

1 16/P12-2 **GIDLEIGH PARK (56)** 8 11 10....**B Carver 164**
Runs: 9 Wins: 5(S,GS) Places: 2 £132,940
Trainer: H Fry Owner: The Eyre Family

2 31/11-11 ● **IL ETAIT TEMPS (42) (D,T)** 8 11 10....**P Townend★180**
Runs: 19 Wins: 9(S,GS,G) Places: 6 £637,407
Trainer: W P Mullins (IRE) Owner: Hollywood Racing & Barnane Stud

3 1212-22 **JONBON (42) (C&D,F)** 10 11 10....**H Cobden 174**
Runs: 26 Wins: 19(S,GS,G) Places: 7 £1,446,972
Trainer: N Henderson Owner: Mr John P McManus

4 21-1111 **THISTLE ASK (21) (D,S)** 9 11 10....**H Skelton 162**
Runs: 14 Wins: 6(GS,G) Places: 3 £173,646
Trainer: D Skelton Owner: Mr T C McKeever

**TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 2, 4 CHEEK PIECES: No. 3 HOOD: Nos. 2, 4. SOFT/HEAVY WINNERS: Nos. 1, 2, 3.**

**SP FORECAST:** 4-7 Il Etait Temps, 4 Jonbon, 13-2 Thistle Ask, 15-2 Gidleigh Park.

**2025: Jonbon 9-11-10, Nico De Boinville 8-13 Fav (N Henderson), 4 ran.**

**GUIDE: IL ETAIT TEMPS**' jumping left a little to be desired earlier on in his chasing career but it has come on leaps and bounds since defeating **Jonbon** in the Celebration Chase (1m7f, gd) last April. The latter had no answers to Willie Mullins' charge in the Tingle Creek (1m7f, gd-sft) last month and is likely to have to settle for second again. If there are any chinks in the armour of **Il Etait Temps** it might be progressive front-runner **Thistle Ask** that exposes them. Five from six over fences having routed his rivals in the Desert Orchid (2m, gd), Harry Skelton will look to fashion an unassailable lead aboard the gelding. **Gidleigh Park** has a bit to find, but his second in the Manifesto (2m4f, gd-sft) did at least prove he is more than capable.

## 4.05 BETMGM EBF 'NH' NOVICES' HURDLE
£13,202 (3) 2m 5f 146yds (9)

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 41-515 | **KASINO DES MOTTES (35)** J Tizzard 6 11-8 | **B J Powell** | **★124** |
| 2 | 531 | **LAGUNA BEACH (38)** N Henderson 5 11-8 | **J Bowen** | **123** |
| 3 | 1-17 | **MINELLA MARATHON (36)** D Skelton 5 11-8 | **H Skelton** | **114** |
| 4 | 21 | ● **THE BURREN MAN (48)** Harry Derham 5 11-8 | **Paul O'Brien** | **121** |
| 5 | P | **BETGOODWIN (69)** C Gordon 7 11-2 | **F Gordon** | **–** |
| 6 | 22P-LP | **MYMILKMAN (35)** C Gordon 6 11-2 | **T Cannon** | **85** |
| 7 | 1 | **TOBYSHILL (98)** N & W Twiston-Davies 6 11-2 | **S Twiston-Davies** | **–** |
| 8 | 233-22 | **UPTOWN DANDY (35)** B Pauling 6 11-2 | **B R Jones** | **120** |
| 9 | 2- | **WHISKEY YANKEE (302)** S Thomas 5 11-2 | **D Johnston** | **–** |

**TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 3, 4, 9. SOFT/HEAVY WINNERS: Nos. 4.**

**SP FORECAST:** 2 Laguna Beach, 11-4 The Burren Man, 4 Kasino Des Mottes, 8 Whiskey Yankee, Minella Marathon, 12 Uptown Dandy, Tobyshill, 100 Others.

**2025: Jax Junior 6-11-9, Tom Cannon 13-2 (L Wadham), 6 ran.**

## AFTERNOON RESULTS

### MARKET RASEN: Hurdle: good to soft-soft in places; Chase: soft-good to soft in places

**12.18—THE RESDEV TYKE** (Ben Smith, 11-10 fav) 1; Character Testing (20-1) 2; Shan't Wait (7-2 2nd fav) 3. H'cap 9 ran. hd, 6½l. (M & D Easterby). Tote: £2.10; pl £1.40, £4.30, £1.20. exacta: £24.10. tricast: £62.85. trifecta: £89.30. CSF: £26.17. Non-runner: Bluenose Belle.

**12.53—HOLD THE SERVE** (L Saunders, 2-5 fav) 1; Shotgun Rider (7-2 2nd fav) 2; Typhoon Warrior (12-1) 3. 8 ran. 9l, 2½l. (O Murphy). Tote: £1.40; pl £1.10, £2.30, £1.02. exacta: £2.20. trifecta: £9.00. CSF: £2.69.

**1.28—HEART OVER HEAD** (J J Burke, 18-5 2nd fav) 1; Tzarmix (11-4 fav) 2; Seahouses (8-1) 3. H'cap 9 ran. 2l, 5½l. (F O'Brien). Tote: £5.10; pl £2.00, £1.60, £2.40. exacta: £17.60. tricast: £74.88. trifecta: £93.90. CSF: £14.75. Non-runner: Henrysbrotherjack.

**2.05—FILANDERER** (J J Burke, 7-2) 1; Mahons Glory (5-2 fav) 2; Doyen Du Bar (11-4 2nd fav) 3. H'cap 8 ran. 11l, 4¼l. (H Morrison). Tote: £4.50; pl £1.30, £1.40, £1.40. exacta: £14.90. tricast: £26.51. trifecta: £53.60. CSF: £13.30.

**2.40—MALINA ROAD** (J J Burke, 13-2) 1; The Flaggy Shore (9-4 fav) 2; Katios Queen (4-1 jt 2nd fav) 3. 9 ran. 1¾l, 7½l. (F O'Brien). Tote: £7.50; pl £1.70, £1.30, £1.80. exacta: £23.60. trifecta: £112.40. CSF: £21.81. Non-runner: I C U In My Dreams.

**3.10—EL ROJO GRANDE** (Shane Quinlan, 10-3 2nd fav) 1; Lone Soldier (5-1) 2; Kitsilano (14-1) 3. H'cap 9 ran. 1l, 8½l. (Katy Price; 3-1 fav Disco Annie). Tote: £4.34; pl £1.70, £1.70, £3.60. exacta: £23.20. tricast: £210.06. trifecta: £194.50. CSF: £21.78.

**3.45—KAYCE DUTTON** (R T Dunne, 13-2) 1; Concetto (10-1) 2; Heard That (12-1) 3. H'cap 8 ran. 2¾l, 30l. (C & A Pogson; 3-1 fav My Bobby Dazzler). Tote: £7.50; pl £2.10, £3.50, £3.30. exacta: £73.40. tricast: £759.51. trifecta: £593.10. CSF: £65.43.

**Jackpot: £6,993.00**
**Placepot: £8.80**
**(Race 1) 1, 7, 2; (2) 1, 4, 5; (3) 1, 3, 10; (4) 7, 5, 6; (5) 5, 8, 4; (6) 9, 8, 5;**
**Quadpot: £5.30**

### NEWCASTLE: Standard

**12.30—BLUE LAKOTA** (J Nicholls, 10-1) 1; True Promise (4-1 2nd fav) 2; Cargin Bhui (5-2 fav) 3. H'cap 9 ran. nk, 1¼l. (K Ryan). Tote: £13.80; pl £3.00, £1.90, £1.60. exacta: £37.90. tricast: £133.27. trifecta: £144.20. CSF: £49.89.

**1.05—SUPREME KING** (R Kavanagh, 7-2 jt fav) 1; Dandy Magic (7-1) 2; Express Train (14-1) 3. H'cap 9 ran. ns, 1l. (P Evans; 7-2 jtfav Judgment Call). Tote: £4.90; pl £2.30, £2.20, £4.20. exacta: £38.20. tricast: £312.67. trifecta: £429.70. CSF: £29.85.

**1.40—STATEIRA** (O Murphy, 6-4 fav) 1; Nikki Swango (13-2 2nd fav) 2; Indigo Dream (8-1) 3. H'cap 11 ran. 4l, 1¼l. (A Balding). Tote: £2.50; pl £1.10, £2.50, £3.10. exacta: £12.10. tricast: £64.51. trifecta: £81.10. CSF: £11.96.

**2.15—DUKE OF OXFORD** (H Crouch, 5-1 jt 2nd fav) 1; Ribble Vibe (5-1 jt 2nd fav) 2; Brasil Power (8-1) 3. H'cap 11 ran. 3l, 3½l. (M Bell; 4-1 fav Berkshire Sundance). Tote: £6.50; pl £2.70, £2.60, £2.10. exacta: £39.10. tricast: £202.16. trifecta: £197.30. CSF: £31.20.

**2.50—KING'S CODE** (P Cosgrave, 18-1) 1; Parlando (9-2 2nd fav) 2; Beylerbeyi (22-1) 3. H'cap 13 ran. 2½l, 1l. (P Evans; 6-4 fav Regal Ulixes). Tote: £28.60; pl £6.70, £1.40, £3.90. exacta: £157.50. tricast: £1873.23. trifecta: £3553.90. CSF: £100.53. Non-runner: Midnight Lion.

**3.20—THE CALTONIAN** (K O'Neill, 33-1) 1; Pocklington (10-3 fav) 2; Fivethousandtoone (28-1) 3. H'cap 14 ran. ¾l, ¾l. (Miss L Perratt). Tote: £58.90; pl £10.40, £1.60, £10.50. exacta: £315.20. tricast: £3320.24. trifecta: £3387.60. CSF: £139.50.

**3.55—TEN CARAT HARRY** (B Loughnane, 4-1 jt 2nd fav) 1; Lord Harcourt (17-2) 2; One And Gone (50-1) 3. H'cap 11 ran. 1¼l, nk. (J Osborne; 10-3 fav Augustus Gloop). Tote: £5.10; pl £2.00, £3.20, £4.50. exacta: £33.90. tricast: £1528.21. trifecta: £1466.70. CSF: £40.32.

**4.30—WITCH HUNTER** (S M Levey, 11-2) 1; Talis Evolvere (13-2) 2; Dosman (18-1) 3. H'cap 9 ran. 1½l, hd. (R Hannon; 7-4 fav Storm Star). Tote: £7.00; pl £5.70, £1.70, £1.80. exacta: £38.70. tricast: £608.25. trifecta: £504.00. CSF: £42.04.

**Placepot: £105.20**
**(Race 1) 4, 2, 8; (2) 4, 2, 7; (3) 2, 8, 4; (4) 2, 7, 3; (5) 4, 8, 3; (6) 11, 3, 5;**
**Quadpot: £29.10**

### WINDSOR: Soft-heavy in places on hurdle course

**12.40—MONEYGARROW** (H Skelton, 5-2 2nd fav) 1; They Call Me Hugo (6-5 fav) 2; Swindon Village (3-1) 3. 6 ran. ¾l, 12l. (D Skelton). Tote: £3.50; pl £1.70, £1.60. exacta: £6.70. trifecta: £9.20. CSF: £6.11.

**1.15—GUARD THE MOON** (S Twiston-Davies, 11-2) 1; Queensbury Boy (9-4 fav) 2; Saint Davy (4-1) 3. H'cap 5 ran. 3¼l, 1¼l. (N & W Twiston-Davies). Tote: £6.50; pl £1.80, £2.90. exacta: £22.30. trifecta: £58.60. CSF: £18.66.

**1.50—NO QUESTIONS ASKED** (B R Jones, 7-2 2nd fav) 1; Be Aware (8-15 fav) 2; Alnilam (4-1) 3. 3 ran. 1l, 29l. (B Pauling). Tote: £4.50; exacta: £4.90. trifecta: £5.00. CSF: £6.02. Non-runners: Hansard, Roadlesstravelled.

**2.25—BLUEY** (B R Jones, 3-1 2nd fav) 1; Largy Force (7-2) 2; All The Glory (40-1) 3. H'cap 9 ran. 1l, ns. (E Lavelle; 2-1 fav Hollygrove Cha Cha). Tote: £4.00; pl £1.60, £1.70, £6.20. exacta: £14.40. tricast: £347.60. trifecta: £292.10. CSF: £14.00.

**3.00—POTTERS CHARM** (S Twiston-Davies, 2-1 2nd fav) 1; Altobelli (5-1) 2; Take No Chances (7-2) 3. 5 ran. 1¼l, nk. (N & W Twiston-Davies; 15-8 fav Nemean Lion). Tote: £3.00; pl £1.20, £2.70. exacta: £11.30. trifecta: £44.00. CSF: £12.12.

**3.35—HOT FUSS** (D Bass, 10-1) 1; Wilful (85-40 fav) 2; Live Conti (12-1) 3. H'cap 14 ran. 2¾l, 3¼l. (T Dascombe). Tote: £12.50; pl £3.60, £1.60, £2.70. exacta: £42.60. tricast: £276.31. trifecta: £639.90. CSF: £30.52. Non-runners: Bubble Dubi, Listentoyourheart.

**4.05—OFFICER OF STATE** (C Quinn, 25-1) 1; Tahmuras (22-1) 2; Aviation (6-1) 3. H'cap 10 ran. 3l, 9l. (G & J Moore; 7-2 fav As The Fella Says). Tote: £27.20; pl £7.00, £5.70, £1.60. exacta: £695.80. tricast: £3707.10. trifecta: £2018.00. CSF: £414.60. Non-runners: Impatient, Sheldon.

**Placepot: £104.10**
**(Race 1) 1, 3; (2) 2, 5; (3) 4; (4) 1, 7, 3; (5) 2, 4; (6) 11, 1, 2;**
**Quadpot: £39.60**

# HAYDOCK RACINGTV

## 12.15 SKY BET EXTRA PLACES HANDICAP CHASE
£7,657 (Class 4) 2m 3f 203yds (9 declared)

1 134-24F ● **CERENDIPITY (22) (D)** J Parkinson & S Smith 9 12-2 **Jack Power(5)** 122
2 123P-11 **THROATLASH (22) (F)** D McCain 7 11-13 ........ **B Hughes** 120
3 4-45223 **SOUTHOFTHEBORDER (29)** Miss H Knight 8 11-11 .. **C Deutsch** 123
4 16LPL-7 **CHOOSE A COPPER (37) (D) (T)** L Russell & M Scudamore 8 11-6 **P W Wadge** 114
5 4LLL34- **IMPERIAL BEDE (402) (D)** J & A O'Neill 8 11-0 **Jonjo O'Neill Jr** –
6 7/2131-5 **ICARE GRANDCHAMP (31) (D) (T)** G & J Moore 8 11-0 ... **C Quinn** 115
7 3PP-622 **BRIDGE COURT (20)** A M Thomson 7 10-8 ........ **C Bewley** 122
8 1242-2U **TOMMY COMBATS (2)** M Todhunter 7 10-7 ........ **Doubtful** 124
9 32-3F25 **DJ PETE (20)** S-J Davies 8 10-3 ........ **S Fenelon(5)** ★125

**TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 4, 7 CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 1, 7.**
**SOFT/HEAVY WINNERS: Nos. 1, 4, 5, 3, 2, 8.**

**SP FORECAST:** 9-4 Throatlash, 11-4 Cerendipity, 5 Bridge Court, 7 Imperial Bede, 10 Icare Grandchamp, Southoftheborder, 12 Dj Pete, 25 Choose A Copper.

**2025: Margaret's Legacy 8-12-0, Harry Bannister 9-4 (W Greatrex), 7 ran.**

## 12.50 SKY BET CLUB HANDICAP HURDLE
£8,186 (3) 1m 7f 144yds (8)

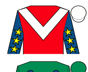
1 0171-06 **CRACKING RHAPSODY (42) (D)** Ewan Whillans 7 12-2 **Craig Nichol** 137
2 L-84L63 **BRENTFORD HOPE (18) (C&D)** Harry Derham 9 11-13 .. **M Fox(7)** ★139
3 362312- **BERTIE'S BALLET (339) (C&D)** D Sayer 8 11-1 . **Sean Quinlan** 138
4 337-144 **CABALLO DE GUERRA (42) (D) (T)** L Russell & M Scudamore 5 11-0 **D R Fox** 133
5 1/15-2L4 **CAPTAIN BUTLER (15) (D)** Ruth Jefferson 8 10-13 ... **J Hamilton** 137
6 1L/8L-L5 **A DIFFERENT KIND (28) (C&D)** D McCain 9 10-13 ... **B Hughes** 136
7 U11-311 ● **SMART DECISION (22) (D,F)** T Easterby 5 10-13 **Mr William Easterby(5)** 135
8 4F-2F37 **COUMEENOOLE (74)** D Skelton 7 10-12 ........ **T Durrell** 133

**TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 2, 6 CHEEK PIECES: No. 2.**
**SOFT/HEAVY WINNERS: Nos. 6, 3, 2, 5, 1, 7.**

**SP FORECAST:** 9-4 Smart Decision, 7-2 Bertie's Ballet, 9-2 Brentford Hope, 5 Caballo De Guerra, 12 Cracking Rhapsody, Coumeenoole, Captain Butler, 14 A Different Kind.

**2025: Bertie's Ballet 7-11-1, Henry Brooke 13-2 (D Sayer), 8 ran.**

## 1.25 ROSSINGTON MAIN NOVICES' HDL (GRD 2) ITV1
£45,560 (1) 1m 7f 144yds (6)


1 2131-11 **HURRICANE PAT (42) (D,T)** 6 11 9 ........ **C Quinn** 139
Runs: 7 Wins: 4(S,GS,G) Places: 2 £38,341
Trainer: G & J Moore Owner: Noel Fehily Racing Syndicate

2 323-11 **OLD PARK STAR (36) (D,S)** 6 11 7 . **N De Boinville** ★150
Runs: 5 Wins: 2(GS,G) Places: 3 £18,239
Trainer: N Henderson Owner: Gordon & Su Hall

3 2-312 **SOLDIER REEVES (42) (D)** 5 11 7 ....... **T Durrell** 137
Runs: 4 Wins: 1(S) Places: 2 £21,256
Trainer: D Skelton Owner: Mr Des Grech

4 211-11 ● **JAPETUS (22)** 5 11 4 ........ **B Hughes** 137
Runs: 5 Wins: 4(GS,G) Places: 1 £14,870
Trainer: N Richards Owner: Mrs Pat Sloan

5 13 **TASHKHAN (19)** 8 11 4 ........ **Craig Nichol** 130
Runs: 2 Wins: 1(S) £5,905
Trainer: B Ellison Owner: Mr P Boyle

6 3 **WAHRAAN (63)** 8 11 4 ........ **A Anderson** 117
Runs: 1 Places: 1 £2,508
Trainer: J Bedi Owner: Nohopersjokers&Rogues

**TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 3, 6 HOOD: No. 6.**
**SOFT/HEAVY WINNERS: Nos. 1, 3, 5.**

**SP FORECAST:** 4-6 Old Park Star, 15-8 Hurricane Pat, 10 Soldier Reeves, 14 Japetus, 66 Tashkhan, 100 Wahraan.

**2025: Dedicated Hero 6-11-4, Ryan Mania 6-1 (A M Thomson), 7 ran.**

**GUIDE: OLD PARK STAR** had a couple of subsequent winners behind when winning on his hurdles debut at Kempton (2m, gd) and then stepped up another gear when seeing off some smart opposition by 12 lengths plus at Cheltenham (2m1f, gd-sft). He currently sits towards the top of the betting market for this year's Supreme Novices' Hurdle and can strike here before a crack at that major prize. **Hurricane Pat** readily beat **Soldier Reeves** in Listed company at Sandown (2m, sft) and he will likely confirm that form, despite the runner-up being 5lb better off today. **Japetus** deserves a crack at this but could find it too hot.

### THE SCOUT
12.15 Cerendipity
12.50 Smart Decision
1.25 Japetus
2.00 KONFUSION (nap)
2.35 Heather Honey
3.10 Jasmin De Cotte
3.45 Kykorock

## 2.00 PETER MARSH HANDICAP CHASE ITV1
£56,950 (1) 3m 1f 125yds (7)

1 1P56P-2 **ROYALE PAGAILLE (56) (C&D)** 12 12 0 ... **C Deutsch** ★165
Runs: 32 Wins: 7(S) Places: 6 £600,435
Trainer: V Williams Owner: Mrs S Ricci

2 3L25-53 **JOHNNYWHO (28)** 9 11 1 ........ **Jonjo O'Neill Jr** 164
Runs: 15 Wins: 4(S,GS) Places: 3 £93,138
Trainer: J & A O'Neill Owner: Mr John P McManus

3 12-1U11 ● **KONFUSION (22) (F)** 8 11 0 ........ **C Bewley** 157
Runs: 15 Wins: 5(S,GS,G) Places: 4 £97,177
Trainer: J Parkinson & S Smith Owner: Mrs A Ellis

4 P0/PP-PP **NASSALAM (62) (T)** 9 11 0 ........ **Doubtful** –
Runs: 25 Wins: 7(S,GS) Places: 3 £195,529
Trainer: G & J Moore Owner: John and Yvonne Stone

5 51F11-F **MYRETOWN (49)** 9 10 11 ........ **D R Fox** 159
Runs: 12 Wins: 5(S,GS) Places: 1 £106,425
Trainer: L Russell & M Scudamore Owner: Wymer & Russell

6 1342-56 **IMPERIAL SAINT (35)** 8 10 10 . **C Pritchard(3)** 162
Runs: 17 Wins: 6(GS,G) Places: 5 £97,071
Trainer: P Hobbs & J White Owner: Richard Johnson Racing

7 32PL-32 **RICHMOND LAKE (42) (C)** 10 10 3 .... **B Hughes** 160
Runs: 29 Wins: 7(S,GS) Places: 6 £146,954
Trainer: D McCain Owner: Hemmings Racing

**BLINKERS: No. 4 TONGUE STRAP: No. 2.**
**SOFT/HEAVY WINNERS: Nos. 2, 3, 5, 4, 7, 1.**

**SP FORECAST:** 15-8 Myretown, 9-4 Konfusion, 7-2 Johnnywho, 7 Royale Pagaille, 10 Richmond Lake, 25 Imperial Saint.

**2025: Mr Vango 9-10-2, Jack Tudor 4-1 (S Bradstock), 8 ran.**

**GUIDE: Myretown** took a crashing fall when leading in the Coral Gold Cup (3m2f, gd-sft), but he remains with significant potential judged on his Ultima success at Cheltenham (3m1f, gd-sft) last March and a clear round would see him bang in contention. Connections are still wondering whether they have a Gold Cup contender on their hands, while similar comments apply to **KONFUSION**. One of the most improved chasers this season, going up 30lb for a trio of victories, the eight-year-old has already landed two major prizes with the Rehearsal (2m7f, gd-sft) and the Rowland Meyrick (3m, sft) and an impressive victory here could see him line up in the blue riband event come March. Course specialist **Royale Pagaille** and **Johnnywho** head the remainder.

## 2.35 SKY BET ACCA FREEZE H'CAP HDL ITV1
£15,843 (3) 3m 58yds (10)

1 P/POP-P8 **STAY AWAY FAY (22) (D)** 9 12 0 . **Miss Olive Nicholls(5)** 83
Runs: 15 Wins: 5(S,GS,G) Places: 1 £170,438
Trainer: P Nicholls Owner: Bell, Lyons, Hill

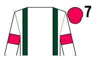
2 1874-3F **PHANTOMOFTHEPOINTS (39) (T)** 8 11 9 .. **J Tudor** 137
Runs: 17 Wins: 2(S,GS) Places: 6 £47,038
Trainer: D Pipe Owner: Mrs Jo Tracey,k Alexander, P&S Brycela

3 F/LLP-45 **KYNTARA (36)** 10 11 9 ........ **C Deutsch** 136
Runs: 19 Wins: 4(S,GS) Places: 8 £63,148
Trainer: Mrs M Rowley Owner: Lady Dulverton

4 1/761-81 **BOTH BARRELS (19)** 8 11 2 ........ **Craig Nichol** 132
Runs: 12 Wins: 3(S,GS) Places: 2 £27,705
Trainer: D WhillansOwner: Mrs A Marshall & Mr D Swindlehurst

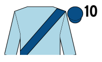
5 P-3144P **PINOT ROUGE (49) (D)** 8 11 2 ....... **C Rabbitt(3)** 134
Runs: 17 Wins: 3(S,GS) Places: 2 £35,599
Trainer: S Corbett Owner: Mr S Oliver

6 L01473 **ICARE ALLEN (22)** 8 11 2 ........ **Jonjo O'Neill Jr** 138
Runs: 34 Wins: 5(S,G) Places: 6 £94,896
Trainer: J & A O'Neill Owner: Mr John McManus


7 110-L21 **DALSTON LAD (22)** 6 10 13 ........ **T Durrell** 133
Runs: 7 Wins: 4(S,GS) Places: 1 £17,017
Trainer: D Skelton Owner: Cherry Knoll Farm, M Ward

8 12115L- **SOLAR SYSTEM (301) (C)** 7 10 9 ... **C Pritchard(3)** ★140
Runs: 13 Wins: 4(S,GS,G) Places: 3 £28,542
Trainer: P Hobbs & J White Owner: Mr John P McManus

9 113613 ● **HEATHER HONEY (35) (D)** 7 10 6 .. **P J Kavanagh** 135
Runs: 13 Wins: 4(G) Places: 1 £19,603
Trainer: J Parkinson & S Smith Owner: Mrs S Smith


10 47-28P5 **INIS OIRR (18) (D,T)** 9 10 5 ........ **D R Fox** 132
Runs: 25 Wins: 2(GS) Places: 5 £85,772
Trainer: L Russell & M Scudamore Owner: Mr Gerry McGladery

**BLINKERS: Nos. 1, 5 TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 1, 2, 6 CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 2, 7, 10. SOFT/HEAVY WINNERS: Nos. 4, 7, 6, 3, 2, 5, 8, 1.**

**SP FORECAST:** 3 Dalston Lad, 5 Heather Honey, 11-2 Solar System, 13-2 Kyntara, Both Barrels, 8 Phantomofthepoints, 10 Icare Allen, Pinot Rouge, 25 Others.

**2025: Uncle Bert 8-11-10, J Turner(5) 10-1 (N & W Twiston-Davies), 11 ran.**

**GUIDE: Dalston Lad**, **Kyntara** and **Both Barrels** each like to have things their own way at the head of affairs but, should they go too quickly, **SOLAR SYSTEM** might prove too strong late on. The seven-year-old lost his way last spring having made considerable progress over the winter, culminating with a win on this card 12 months ago (2m5f, sft). He's completely unexposed over 3m and may well resume his improvement. **Icare Allen** ran well to finish third at Wetherby (2m5f, sft) on Boxing Day and is likely to appreciate a return to further.

## 3.10 SKY BET BUILD A BET HANDICAP HURDLE
£5,281 (4) 2m 5f 50yds (17)

1 L2L8P/L **HILLVIEW (19)** G Hanmer 10 12-0 ........ **B Macey(7)** 100
2 5P1-25 **AKIMOS (48)** N Henderson 6 11-13 ........ **N De Boinville** 121
3 L742-3F **BELOW THE RADAR (37)** P Nicholls 8 11-13 . **F Keighley(7)** 119
4 436-1U2 **KNOMOREDIAMONDS (45) (T)** L Russell & M Scudamore 6 11-12 **A Doyle(3)** 120
5 4U23-UL **RING O ROSES (16)** Miss H Knight 8 11-10 ........ **C Deutsch** 93
6 06L1-32 **MAGIC WAVE (19) (D)** M Walford 10 11-9 ........ **J Hamilton** 116
7 4B12-42 **HIGH DANCER (49) (C&D)** N Richards 6 11-9 ...... **B Hughes** 116
8 PF61-21 **JUDICIAL DEFERENCE (26)** O Greenall & J Guerriero 7 11-7 **Craig Nichol** 117
9 1-13PLP **KILMORE ROCK (26)** S Corbett 7 11-7 ........ **C Rabbitt(3)** ★123
10 L335-F7 ● **JASMIN DE COTTE (86)** D Skelton 7 11-5 ..... **L Harrison** –
11 6721U2 **WASTHATOK (20)** P Kirby 8 11-2 ........ **J Williamson(3)** 115
12 21223-L **BRODERICK (251)** J Candlish 6 11-2 ........ **Sean Quinlan** 121
13 P-29381 **KILLYCARN (16)** J Parkinson & S Smith 6 11-1 **P J Kavanagh** 119
14 P/62L43- **VICTORIA MILANO (271) (D)** O Greenall & J Guerriero 8 11-0 **T Wynne** 122
15 5P-242P **ROARING HOME (36)** H Daly 7 11-0 ........ **T Bellamy** 120
16 306-043 **FAST WORK (22)** J Parkinson & S Smith 6 10-12 ... **C Bewley** 119
17 45-5541 **BROOKSIDE LA (22)** D Skelton 6 10-12 ........ **T Durrell** 116

**TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 8, 11, 14 CHEEK PIECES: No. 9 HOOD: No. 5.**
**SOFT/HEAVY WINNERS: Nos. 2, 3, 17, 14.**

**SP FORECAST:** 5 Brookside La, 7 Judicial Deference, 15-2 Knomorediamonds, 8 Akimos, High Dancer, Killycarn, 10 Jasmin De Cotte, 12 Magic Wave, Fast Work, Below The Radar, 16 Others.

**2025: Solar System 6-11-5, M Nolan 7-2 Fav (P Hobbs & J White), 11 ran.**

## 3.45 SKY BET, FOR THE FANS HANDICAP CHASE
£9,770 (3) 2m 67yds (10)

1 1341L-U **CLASSIC MAESTRO (68) (C&D)** J Candlish 8 12-2 .. **Sean Quinlan** 131
2 6L2-221 **ESCAPEANDEVADE (28) (C&D,F)** Harry Derham 10 12-0. **H Reed** 134
3 50L-31L **HARDY DU SEUIL (28) (D)** J Snowden 9 11-11 **Isabelle Ryder(7)** –
4 P20-2F6 **PALAMON (83)** D Skelton 6 11-10 ........ **L Harrison** 129
5 PL1-PPU **STORMIN CROSSGALES (31) (D)** M Young 9 11-2 ... **C Deutsch** 117
6 PL3/L31- **MR GREY SKY (326) (D)** K Bailey & M Nicholls 12 11-2 .. **T Bellamy** 131
7 26P1L-1 **KOUKEO (16) (D)** J & A O'Neill 6 11-1 ........ **Jonjo O'Neill Jr** 132
8 68-LL11 ● **KYKOROCK (22) (D)** D Skelton 6 10-11 ........ **T Durrell** 132
9 3LL2-L3 **GREY DIAMOND (49) (C&D)** D McCain 12 10-9 ..... **T Gillard** 133
10 3-12L43 **WILLIE SHAKE HANDS (35) (D)** S England 7 10-8 .... **C Bewley** ★135

**TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 9, 10 CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 1, 2, 3, 6 HOOD: Nos. 8, 9.**
**SOFT/HEAVY WINNERS: Nos. 1, 2, 9, 3, 8, 6, 5.**

**SP FORECAST:** 5-2 Koukeo, 7-2 Escapeandevade, 4 Kykorock, 13-2 Mr Grey Sky, 8 Palamon, 14 Willie Shake Hands, Hardy Du Seuil, Classic Maestro, 20 Others.

**2025: Prairie Wolf 8-12-0, P Kavanagh(3) 11-1 (J Parkinson & S Smith), 7 ran.**

**TRACK FACTS: GOING:** Good to Soft. Left Handed. **TOP TRACK JOCKEY (2021-26):** Brian Hughes 9% Strike rate. **TOP TRACK TRAINER (2021-26):** D Skelton 19% Strike rate. **FIRST TIME:** 1.25 Wahraan (wind surgery), 2.00 Nassalam (wind surgery), 3.10 Victoria Milano (tongue strap, wind surgery), Jasmin De Cotte (wind surgery), Roaring Home (wind surgery), 3.45 Palamon (wind surgery), 12.50 Cracking Rhapsody (wind surgery). **BEATEN FAVOURITES:** 12.15 Bridge Court(hcp ch), Cerendipity(hcp ch), Imperial Bede(hcp ch), Tommy Combats(hcp ch). 12.50 Brentford Hope(hcp hdl). 2.00 Myretown(hcp ch). 2.35 Heather Honey(hcp hdl), Solar System(hcp hdl). 3.10 High Dancer(hcp hdl), Roaring Home(hcp hdl). **LONGEST TRAVELLER: Choose A Copper** (12.15), **Caballo De Guerra** (12.50), **Myretown** (2.00), **Inis Oirr** (2.35), **Knomorediamonds** (3.10) 239 miles. **STABLE SWITCH:** 12.50 **Coumeenoole** from P Nolan in Ireland to D Skelton. 3.10 **Jasmin De Cotte** from P Nolan in Ireland to D Skelton, **Victoria Milano** from A Ralph to O Greenall & J Guerriero. 3.45 **Palamon** from P Nolan in Ireland to D Skelton.

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### THE SCOUT
12.55 Harbour Island
1.32 Gilded Glance
2.05 Tell The Tale
2.43 Hypotenus
3.15 Walk On High
3.50 Steal The Moves
4.20 Little Ledgend

## 12.55 EBF 'NH' MAIDEN HURDLE
£5,446 (Class 4) 2m 3f 1yds (14 declared)

1 50P **ANOTHERMANICMONDAY (30)** Mrs S Gardner 6 11-6 **C P O'Shea(7)** 38
2 4903 **ARNIE MOON (9)** J Tickle 6 11-6 ........ **Taylor Fisher** 94
3 32LL **CHARLIES JETAWAY (29)** S Hosie 5 11-6 ........ **P Hanlon(5)** 74
4 1-23 **DOCTOR ON CALL (55) (S)** P Nicholls 6 11-6 .. **J Tidball(5)** 116
5 5/1-61 **FIVE BAR GATE (47)** N Mulholland 6 11-6 ........ **C O'Farrell** –
6 P-3PP **GEORGES STREET (41)** Claire Hitch 5 11-6 ........ **B Godfrey** –
7 11-27 ● **HARBOUR ISLAND (50)** O Murphy 7 11-6 ........ **S Bowen** ★123
8 212/P7 **JOYAU ALLEN (32)** P Nicholls 7 11-6 ........ **C Gethings** 84
9 16-3L4 **KILWAUGHTER (43)** P Hobbs & J White 6 11-6 **Mr Jack Stenhouse(7)** 111
10 46-5 **KING SACRE (38)** N Hawke 6 11-6 ........ **J M Davies** 76
11 48 **NICE ONE ERIC (50)** B Pauling 5 11-6 ........ **K Woods** 106
12 L6 **PLAY ON COURT (17)** H Dickin 5 11-6 ........ **J Quinlan** –
13 933234 **OCTOBER HILL (18)** D Pipe 6 10-13 ........ **R Corcoran(7)** 114
14 6/2-0 **SHANAGOLDEN GIRL (43)** F O'Brien 6 10-13 ........ **J Best** –

**CHEEK PIECES: No. 3 HOOD: No. 10. SOFT/HEAVY WINNERS: Nos. 5, 8.**

**SP FORECAST:** 7-4 Doctor On Call, 7-2 Harbour Island, 5 October Hill, 11-2 Kilwaughter, 10 Five Bar Gate, 12 Nice One Eric, 14 Joyau Allen, 16 Others.

**2025: Just A Rose 6-10-13, Freddie Gingell(3) 10-3 (P Nicholls), 12 ran.**

## 1.32 MARES' 'NH' MAIDEN HURDLE
£5,446 (4) 2m 104yds (14)

1 43-5 **BEAUTY IN THE PARK (44)** P Nicholls 6 11-4 . **J Tidball(5)** 93
2 PP-12LP **BEE'S KISS (30)** J Frost 6 11-4 ........ **C Iles(5)** 41
3 195-25 **CHATTY GIRL (34)** A Hales 5 11-4 ........ **K Woods** 113
4 19 **EREMENKO (63) (F)** N Henderson 5 11-4 ........ **R T Dunne** –
5 67 **FOUR DECADES (51)** T Ellis 5 11-4 ........ **J Andrews(3)** –
6 ● **GILDED GLANCE** Mrs J Williams 6 11-4 ........ **C Gethings** –
7 11-65U **HERON IN THE PARK (22)** T R George 6 11-4 ....... **S Bowen** ★114
8 22-4 **KLASSY PEARL (20)** C Boultbee-Brooks 6 11-4 .. **R Patrick** 105
9 235 **LYRICAL CHOICE (38)** H Daly 5 11-4 ........ **D Bass** 93
10 1-5 **NO RISK TODAY (51)** F O'Brien 6 11-4 ........ **T Broughton(5)** –
11 44-68 **RENE'S WALK (31)** D Skelton 6 11-4 ........ **C J Todd** 91
12 P21-157 **SHE'S DELIGHTED (52)** F O'Brien 6 11-4 ........ **J Hogan** –
13 2225 **MISS CARBO (18)** N Mulholland 4 10-5 ........ **C O'Farrell** 109
14 4 **UPTON'S MIGHTY OAK (28)** Dr R Newland & J Insole 4 10-5 **L Scott(3)** –

**TONGUE STRAP: No. 10 HOOD: Nos. 7, 11, 13. SOFT/HEAVY WINNERS: Nos. 3, 7.**

**SP FORECAST:** 2 Eremenko, 10-3 Miss Carbo, 8 Heron In The Park, Beauty In The Park, 10 Chatty Girl, 12 No Risk Today, 16 Others.

**2025: Northern Air 6-11-4, Liam Harrison 15-2 (F O'Brien), 12 ran.**

## 2.05 NOVICES' HANDICAP HURDLE
£4,753 (5) 2m 7f 198yds (14)

1 14-5311 **AVADA KEDAVRA (1) (C&D)** D Bridgwater 7 12-0 **J Turner(5)** 101
2 L9573L **LION OF THE DESERT (43)** G Harris 6 11-13 ........ **C Ring** 103
3 854-922 **SMILE BACK (20)** R Phillips 6 11-12 ........ **F Lambert(3)** 105
4 954 **RIBBA HILL (18)** S Hosie 5 11-12 ........ **P Hanlon(5)** 96
5 14-5F37 **KILWORTH (31) (F)** E Lavelle 6 11-9 ........ **S Bowen** 99
6 8/36L-38 **IT'S A BREEZE (32)** P Nicholls 7 11-9 ........ **J Tidball(5)** 92
7 6653/L3 **SNAPDANCE (44)** R Walford 7 11-8 ........ **H Kimber** 101
8 21P-864 ● **TELL THE TALE (36)** N Mulholland 6 11-5 .... **C O'Farrell** 96
9 282142 **SQUARE DU ROULE (18)** N Hawke 6 11-1 ........ **J M Davies** 102
10 86/53-22 **NEWMILL GETAWAY (225)** F O'Brien 7 10-11 ........ **J Hogan** 104
11 79-7LL8 **JEWEL OF WINDSOR (38)** N Mulholland 7 10-9 ... **R T Dunne** 98
12 646324 **NOWYOUVEBINANDUNIT (40)** N Mulholland 9 10-2 **B Harris(3)** ★106
13 9PL86/P- **BRUCIE BONUS (615)** Miss S Robinson 9 10-2 ........ **J Best** –
14 P3-51PL **EMBERSCOMBE (67)** J Tickle 9 10-2 ........ **Taylor Fisher** –

**VISOR: No. 12 CHEEK PIECES: No. 13 HOOD: Nos. 2, 6, 7, 11.**
**SOFT/HEAVY WINNERS: Nos. 3.**

**SP FORECAST:** 3 Avada Kedavra, 7-2 Square Du Roule, 4 Newmill Getaway, 13-2 Smile Back, 12 Ribba Hill, Kilworth, 14 Snapdance, Nowyouvebinandunit, 16 Others.

**2025: Jesuila Des Mottes 6-12-0, James Best 22-1 (E Lavelle), 14 ran.**

## 2.43 GAYNOR CARR HANDICAP CHASE
£7,024 (4) 2m 12yds (7)

1 334-2L1 ● **HYPOTENUS (9) (C&D)** J Tickle 7 12-8 .... **Taylor Fisher** 110
2 271131 **JAIPALETEMPS (27) (D)** D Pipe 7 12-2 ....... **R Corcoran(7)** 112
3 664/7 **RAFFLES HERMES (55)** R Walford 6 11-11 ........ **H Kimber** 93
4 333/P-64 **JACK BLACK (49)** D Skelton 7 11-11 ........ **C J Todd** 86
5 311-461 **CUBAN COURT (35) (D)** N King 8 11-6 ........ **J Quinlan** 113
6 47/334-8 **HOLY LEGEND (193)** Alexandra Dunn 7 10-4 ........ **J Best** –
7 5L-U36L **VALIRANN GOLD (30) (D)** H Brown 9 10-3 ........ **S Bowen** ★117

**TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 2, 5, 7 CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 4, 5, 7 HOOD: No. 3.**
**SOFT/HEAVY WINNERS: Nos. 2, 7.**

**SP FORECAST:** 9-4 Jaipaletemps, 5-2 Hypotenus, 4 Cuban Court, 5 Valirann Gold, 10 Jack Black, 14 Raffles Hermes, 33 Holy Legend.

**2025: First Angel 9-11-8, Sean Bowen 11-2 (M Keighley), 6 ran.**

## 3.15 DRAGONBET WELCOME OFFER H'CAP HDLE
£12,938 (2) 2m 3f 1yds (5)

1 321L/55 **BREWIN'UPASTORM (22) (C&D)** O Murphy 13 12-0 .. **S Bowen** 138
2 6128-LF **AURIGNY MILL (54) (C&D)** R Walford 9 11-12 ...... **H Kimber** ★142
3 5-33326 **BOURBALI (14) (D)** J Tizzard 9 11-1 ........ **R Corcoran(7)** 141
4 8221-11 ● **WALK ON HIGH (75) (D)** H Fry 9 10-12 ........ **C O'Farrell** 136
5 4L-5812 **CELTIC ART (9) (C&D)** J Scott 9 10-9 ........ **C Bament(7)** 140

**BLINKERS: No. 5 TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 1, 4 CHEEK PIECES: No. 2**
**HOOD: No. 4. SOFT/HEAVY WINNERS: Nos. 2, 3, 1, 5, 4.**

**SP FORECAST:** Evens Walk On High, 3 Aurigny Mill, 9-2 Celtic Art, 8 Bourbali, 12 Brewin'upastorm.

**2025: Aurigny Mill 8-11-8, Joe Anderson(3) 13-8 Fav (R Walford), 7 ran.**

# TAUNTON RACINGTV

## 3.50 RETRAINING OF RACEHORSES H'CAP CHS
£5,968 (5) 2m 7f 3yds (15)

1 26-63UP **STAFF SERGEANT LEN (2)** S Hosie 6 12-0 ..... **P Hanlon(5)** –
2 6P2/2-L4 **BATAILLON (32)** P Hobbs & J White 8 11-13 **Mr Jack Stenhouse(7)** 81
3 1-46143 **FAITQUE DE L'ISLE (55)** H Evans 11 11-10 **Miss L M Turner(5)** 101
4 58321L **ZACONY REBEL (26)** S-J Davies 11 11-9 ........ **J Best** 99
5 L3P453 **EDGEWELL (18)** Nick Scholfield 8 11-6 ........ **J Quinlan** 102
6 7-2236P **LOUGH OWEL (40)** D Summersby 8 11-0 ........ **S Bowen** 103
7 L-P141L **SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL (32) (C&D)** J Tickle 11 10-13 **Taylor Fisher** 100
8 56-3FP3 **DARING PLAN (40)** Mrs S Gardner 8 10-12 .. **Lucy Gardner** 103
9 74/333P **SWEET NIGHTINGALE (38)** P Gundry 9 10-11 ........ **B Poste** ★105
10 F0-2LL2 **WATCHOUTITSCOOKIE (58) (D)** N Hawke 8 10-8 .... **J M Davies** 96
11 07LP-4L ● **STEAL THE MOVES (38)** Mrs E Bishop 6 10-8 **Lilly Pinchin** 103
12 1P51-S5 **HOLKHAM HALL (44)** Gordon Treacy 10 10-6 .... **R T Dunne** –
13 19L-L43 **TED THE THIEF (44)** R Walford 6 10-5 ........ **H Kimber** 104
14 8/996-7L **BREAK HEART HILL (40)** Mrs F M Shaw 8 10-2 **B Godfrey** –
15 L07PP-P **ALDERLEY CHARLIE (30)** P Gundry 6 10-2 **Tabitha Worsley(3)** –

**BLINKERS: Nos. 4, 5 TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 4, 6, 9, 12**
**CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 1, 3, 14, 15.**
**SOFT/HEAVY WINNERS: Nos. 3, 6, 7, 4.**

**SP FORECAST:** 3 Faitque De L'Isle, 5 Ted The Thief, 13-2 Watchoutitscookie, 10 Staff Sergeant Len, Edgewell, Daring Plan, 12 Steal The Moves, School For Scandal, Lough Owel, 14 Others.

**2025: Safe Destination 7-12-0, Toby McCain-Mitchell(7) 9-1 (N & W Twiston-Davies), 14 ran.**

## 4.20 3 FEBRUARY RACEDAY H'CAP HURDLE
£4,753 (5) 2m 3f 1yds (14)

1 425-596 **GOOD FOR YOU (22)** Mrs J Williams 5 12-0 ........ **Doubtful** 93
2 27-0542 ● **LITTLE LEDGEND (27)** O Murphy 6 11-13 ........ **S Bowen** 102
3 13502 **BEST NIGHT (9)** D Pipe 5 11-13 ........ **R Corcoran(7)** 98
4 565-794 **BEL OMBRE (41)** N Mulholland 6 11-12 ........ **C O'Farrell** 91
5 8316-U4 **PRAIRIE DIAMOND (34)** M Keighley 7 11-7 ... **Beau Morgan(5)** 98
6 5313-25 **TARITINO (58) (C)** J Tickle 6 11-5 ........ **Taylor Fisher** 103
7 382-202 **BIGZ BELIEF (20)** F O'Brien 9 11-3 ........ **T Broughton(5)** ★104
8 L02/1PP **LUCKY BOUNCE (69)** R Potter 9 11-0 ........ **C Ring** 99
9 PUU-3F4 **COTTON END (72)** Miss J Du Plessis 12 10-10 **Tabitha Worsley(3)** 92
10 93P3P0 **SAUCATS (16)** J Tickle 5 10-4 ........ **B Godfrey** 102
11 1-2PLP **MANCERO (58)** D Pipe 4 10-3 ........ **C Hammond** 94
12 L323-L5 **SAWPIT SIENNA (51) (C)** S Drinkwater 11 10-2 .. **R T Dunne** 102
13 P2-P9P0 **ABSOLUT GREY (37)** D Summersby 5 10-2 ....... **J M Davies** 49
14 8/PU-PPP **POET'S REFLECTION (51) (C&D)** Miss L Blackford 11 10-2 **J Best** –

**BLINKERS: Nos. 1, 11, 12 TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 3, 4, 7, 9, 10, 12**
**CHEEK PIECES: No. 7 HOOD: No. 5. SOFT/HEAVY WINNERS: Nos. 12.**

**SP FORECAST:** 11-4 Little Ledgend, 5 Bigz Belief, 6 Sawpit Sienna, Best Night, Taritino, 8 Prairie Diamond, Bel Ombre, 25 Cotton End, Mancero, Saucats, Lucky Bounce, 66 Others.

**2025: Star Of Affinity 6-11-13, Freddie Gingell(3) 3-1 Fav (J Tizzard), 16 ran.**

**TRACK FACTS: GOING:** Good to Soft. Right Handed. **TOP TRACK JOCKEY (2021-26):** Harry Kimber 16% Strike rate. **TOP TRACK TRAINER (2021-26):** P Nicholls 32% Strike rate. **FIRST TIME:** 1.32 No Risk Today (tongue strap), 2.43 Jack Black (cheek pieces), Raffles Hermes (hood), 3.15 Aurigny Mill (cheek pieces), 3.50 Break Heart Hill (cheek pieces), Alderley Charlie (cheek pieces), 4.20 Mancero (blinkers), 12.55 Charlies Jetaway (cheek pieces). **BEATEN FAVOURITES:** 12.55 Doctor On Call. 1.32 Beauty In The Park. 2.05 Newmill Getaway(hcp hdl), Square Du Roule(hcp hdl). 3.50 Faitque De L'Isle(hcp ch). 4.20 Little Ledgend(hcp hdl). **LONGEST TRAVELLER: Chatty Girl** (1.32) 147 miles. **STABLE SWITCH:** 12.55 **Georges Street** from H Ryall to Claire Hitch.

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## GOSSIP FROM THE GALLOPS

**Lambourn:**
**OLD PARK STAR**
(1.25 Haydock)

**Newmarket:**
**MORROPHORE**
(1.15 Lingfield)

**West:**
**DOCTOR ON CALL**
(12.55 Taunton)

**Midlands:**
**THISTLE ASK**
(3.30 Ascot)

## VITAL STATISTICS

**IN-FORM TRAINERS** (last 10 days) R Beckett 100% (3 wins and 2 places from 5 runners), B Millman 75% (1/2/4), K Bailey & M Nicholls 75% (2/1/4), N Henderson 71% (3/2/7), W P Mullins 68% (13/12/37), A Balding 67% (6/2/12), J Snowden 67% (3/3/9), M Keighley 67% (1/3/6).

**IN-FORM JOCKEYS** Edward Greatrex 67% (3 wins and 5 places from 12 runners), Jonathan Burke 67% (4/4/12), Brian Hughes 64% (5/2/11), Harry Skelton 64% (5/4/14), Paddy Bradley 62% (3/5/13), Freddie Keighley 60% (1/2/5), Rhys Clutterbuck 60% (1/2/5).

## THE SCOUT'S SCOOP SIX HINTS

**Leg 1 KONFUSION (NAP) (No 3)**
(2.00 Haydock)
**Leg 2 VINCENZO (No 6)**
(2.20 Ascot)
**Leg 3 HEATHER HONEY (No 9)**
(2.35 Haydock)
**Leg 4 CAME FROM NOWHERE (No 5)**
(2.53 Ascot)
**Leg 5 JASMIN DE COTTE (No 10)**
(3.10 Haydock)
**Leg 6 KYKOROCK (No 8)**
(3.10 Haydock)

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# SOUTHWELL SKYSPORTSRACING

### THE SCOUT
5.00 Al Hofzan
5.30 Beckon
6.00 Pink Socks
6.30 Secret Road
7.00 You Got To My Soul
7.30 Ay Gee Ell
8.00 Mr Nugget
8.30 Second Avenue

## 5.00 BETMGM.CO.UK HANDICAP
£4,397 (Class 5) 1m 13yds (12 declared)

1 (10) 421710- **LOVE YOUR WORK (18) (C&D)** Darryll Holland 10 9-9 ........ **K O'Neill** 77
2 (1) 332305- **FOREST CAPER (20) (F)** D O'Meara 5 9-9 ........ **C Fallon** 81
3 (2) 32134-5 **ERNIE'S VALENTINE (15) (D)** R Burdon 7 9-8 ........ **P Edwards(7)** 79
4 (8) 916146- **DOUBLE TIME (30) (D)** T Vaughan 8 9-8 ........ **C Hutchinson** 80
5 (6) 658306- **TERRIES ROYALE (37) (D)** M Appleby 6 9-6 ........ **A Rawlinson** 80
6 (3) 179L7-L **SOAMES FORSYTE (15) (C&D)** M Herrington 7 9-5 ........ **D E Hogan** 72
7 (4) 623-3 ● **AL HOFZAN (15)** G Nicholls 4 9-5 ........ **W Cox** 77
8 (9) 1L066-L **FAR AHEAD (7)** R Fahey 4 9-4 ........ **E Tindall(7)** ★84
9 (12) 3736L4- **BEAMING LIGHT (33) (D)** D Loughnane 6 9-4 ........ **R Scott** 79
10 (7) 05167L- **HAVANA TOUCH (37)** J Butler 5 9-2 ........ **S D Bowen** 80
11 (11) 76L327- **MERCURIUS POWER (29) (C&D)** Jessica Macey 8 9-0 ..... **L Edmunds** 79
12 (5) 2608-45 **MINERS GAMBLE (6)** B Ellison 5 8-12 ........ **B Robinson** 76

**VISOR: No. 12 TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 4, 11 CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 6, 11 EYE COVERS: No. 9**
**HOOD: Nos. 2, 4.**

**SP FORECAST:** 11-2 Forest Caper, 6 Terries Royale, Al Hofzan, Double Time, 7 Mercurius Power, 8 Miners Gamble, Ernie's Valentine, 10 Beaming Light, 12 Others.

**2025: No corresponding race.**

## 5.30 BET 10 GET 40 WITH BETMGM HANDICAP 3YO
£4,397 (5) 1m 13yds (11)

1 (7) 331LL6- **FERMAIN (17)** G Boughey 9-9 ........ **Grace McEntee** 75
2 (3) 447-2 **FIVE CAY (8) (F)** Jack Morland 9-9 ........ **C Shepherd** 73
3 (2) L3-4 **CHARMING DOLL (16)** I Mohammed 9-9 ........ **Mason Paetel(5)** 68
4 (10) 492357- **MR WONKA (38)** H Palmer 9-8 ........ **J Hart** ★76
5 (4) 431- ● **BECKON (28) (D)** Harry Charlton 9-8 ........ **G Wood** 72
6 (9) 5542-1 **MASKATTO (14) (D,F)** A Balding 9-8 ........ **P J McDonald** 73
7 (8) 02L- **NORCROSS BROW (37)** O Pears 9-7 ........ **P Mulrennan** 70
8 (11) 632312- **POPTY PING (19) (C)** D O'Meara 9-2 ........ **C J Whiteley(7)** 71
9 (6) L6424-3 **ARCHANGEL JOSEPI (14)** B Ellison 9-1 ........ **B Robinson** 73
10 (5) 739637- **CRYSTAL AURORA (50)** I Furtado 8-12 ........ **S D Bowen** 71
11 (1) 958- **SWEET MABEL (28)** D Loughnane 8-10 ........ **R Scott** 66

**VISOR: No. 4 TONGUE STRAP: No. 1 CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 8, 9.**

**SP FORECAST:** 9-4 Maskatto, 3 Beckon, 5 Popty Ping, 8 Five Cay, 10 Charming Doll, Mr Wonka, 16 Archangel Josepi, 20 Norcross Brow, 25 Others.

**2025: Everyoneknowsadave 9-8, Lewis Edmunds 12-1 (Miss A Murphy), drawn (2), 10 ran.**

## 6.00 BETMGM SAFER GAMBLING CLASSIFIED STKS (DIV 1)
£4,711 (6) 1m 13yds (9)

1 (8) 053-411 ● **PINK SOCKS (4) (C,D)** I Williams 7 10-7 ........ **R Kavanagh(5)** 54
2 (3) 56394-8 **BALQAA (13) (C&D)** T & S Culhane & S Barclay 8 9-9 ........ **J Hart** 56
3 (5) 67827-9 **DASH POWER (5)** L Mullaney 5 9-9 ........ **S B Kirrane** 55
4 (7) 17849-6 **MASHAM MOOR (11) (C&D)** S G West 9 9-9 ........ **A Brookes(3)** 52
5 (4) 76508-8 **MICKEY MONGOOSE (11) (C&D)** Olly Williams 6 9-9 ........ **D Fentiman** 48
6 (9) 7L970-6 **SHOPTILYOUDROP (14)** P Kirby 4 9-9 ........ **P Mulrennan** 47
7 (6) L/L5L87- **STONEACRE (148)** S Dixon 6 9-9 ........ **K O'Neill** 47
8 (1) 73832-2 **TASKHEER (5) (D)** D Steele 8 9-9 ........ **F Marsh** ★59
9 (2) 58690-6 **ZARAMARA (4)** M Appleby 4 9-9 ........ **Liam Wright(5)** 47

**BLINKERS: Nos. 3, 5 TONGUE STRAP: No. 8 CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 4, 7.**

**SP FORECAST:** 4-6 Pink Socks, 3 Taskheer, 12 Balqaa, 14 Masham Moor, 16 Dash Power, 25 Zaramara, Mickey Mongoose, 33 Shoptilyoudrop, Stoneacre.

**2025: Calcutta Dream 7-9-9, Joanna Mason 12-1 (M & D Easterby), drawn (1), 8 ran.**

## 6.30 BETMGM SAFER GAMBLING CLASSIFIED STKS (DIV 2)
£4,711 (6) 1m 13yds (8)

1 (7) 89-2112 ● **SECRET ROAD (6) (C)** James Owen 8 9-13 ........ **S D Bowen** 61
2 (2) 43658-9 **EMBARKED (4) (C,D)** S Dixon 8 9-9 ........ **K O'Neill** 51
3 (6) 863369- **MR SLICKER (262) (D)** Sarah Hollinshead 12 9-9 ........ **C Shepherd** 54
4 (5) 0398-22 **RELEVANT RANGE (7) (D)** I Furtado 7 9-9 ........ **J Nason(3)** ★63
5 (1) 798474- **SPIRIT OF BOWLAND (29) (C&D)** T & S Culhane & S Barclay 7 9-9 ... **P Mulrennan** 58
6 (8) 6/7LL-06 **SUMMER EVENING (13)** D Flood 4 9-9 ........ **M Slater(7)** 48
7 (4) 7670-54 **TOP GUN TINA (7) (D,F)** D Thompson 6 9-9 ........ **S B Kirrane** 52
8 (3) 07654-9 **YORKSTONE (7) (C&D)** M & D Easterby 6 9-9 ........ **Joanna Mason** 55

**BLINKERS: Nos. 2, 8.**

**SP FORECAST:** 2 Secret Road, 5-2 Relevant Range, 5 Spirit Of Bowland, 8 Top Gun Tina, 10 Summer Evening, Yorkstone, 16 Embarked, 25 Mr Slicker.

**2025: Just Typical 4-9-9, Ryan Kavanagh(7) 11-8 Fav (I Williams), drawn (8), 10 ran.**

## 7.00 GAMBLE RESPONSIBLY AT BETMGM NOVICE STAKES
£6,480 (3) 1m 13yds (7)

1 (1) 0/7- **TEGGY LASSO (20)** I Furtado 4 10-2 ........ **J Hart** 51
2 (5) 61- **VENETIAN PRINCE (154) (F)** A Balding 3 9-3 ........ **P J McDonald** ★76
3 (7) 65- **INHERENT RESOLVE (30)** M Bell 3 8-10 ........ **C Shepherd** 64
4 (6) **KNOWLEDGE** S & E Crisford 3 8-10 ........ **H Davies** –
5 (2) 9- **LORCA'S WALTZ (21)** W Haggas 3 8-10 ........ **C Fallon** 46
6 (3) L0- **MADJID (40)** Harry Charlton 3 8-10 ........ **L Edmunds** 37
7 (4) ● **YOU GOT TO MY SOUL** R Beckett 3 8-5 ........ **E Greatrex** –

**HOOD: No. 3.**

**SP FORECAST:** Evens Venetian Prince, 10-3 You Got To My Soul, 4 Lorca's Waltz, 6 Knowledge, 20 Inherent Resolve, 50 Teggy Lasso, 66 Madjid.

**2025: No corresponding race.**

## 7.30 MIDNITE A NEXT GENERATION BETTING APP H'CAP
£5,653 (4) 4f 214yds (6)

1 (5) 361447- **NORTHERN SPIRIT (35) (C,D)** B Ellison 6 9-10 ........ **B Robinson** 87
2 (4) 366L8-4 **MASTER OF MY FATE (5) (C&D)** J & S Quinn 5 9-9 ........ **J Hart** 86
3 (3) 61435-3 **STAR CHORUS (7) (C&D)** M Murphy 4 9-9 ........ **C Shepherd** 86
4 (6) 009050- **MOONSTONE BOY (99) (C&D)** J Candlish 5 9-6 ........ **G Wood** 82
5 (1) 765614- ● **AY GEE ELL (29) (C&D,F)** R Fahey 4 9-4 ........ **E Tindall(7)** 88
6 (2) 3562-15 **POPULAR DREAM (4) (C&D)** D Shaw 6 8-10 ........ **Joanna Mason** ★89

**VISOR: No. 5 TONGUE STRAP: No. 3 CHEEK PIECES: No. 1.**

**SP FORECAST:** 9-4 Star Chorus, 5-2 Ay Gee Ell, 5 Popular Dream, Master Of My Fate, 6 Northern Spirit, 14 Moonstone Boy.

**2025: Rhythm N Hooves 5-9-7, Luke Morris 11-2 (R Cowell), drawn (6), 7 ran.**

## 8.00 MAKE THE MOVE TO MIDNITE HANDICAP
£3,768 (6) 1m 4f 14yds (9)

1 (8) L/L7769- **SKYCUTTER (28)** T & S Culhane & S Barclay 8 10-0 ........ **S Donohoe** 71
2 (6) 13521-3 ● **MR NUGGET (14) (C)** D M Simcock 5 9-13 ........ **R Scott** 69
3 (5) 2L4448- **ALNAYEF (21) (T)** J Goldie 5 9-11 ........ **P Mulrennan** 70
4 (1) 998535- **SPEC OF LIGHT (20) (C)** D Loughnane 4 9-11 ........ **F Marsh** 65
5 (4) 486L- **THE CORPORATE GUY (18)** Jack Jones 4 9-11 ........ **D E Hogan** 70
6 (2) 14712L- **HARLINGTON (97) (D)** Charlie Clover 5 9-9 ........ **C Fallon** 68
7 (7) 132L33- **LEDNIKOV (196) (C&D)** I Furtado 8 9-6 ........ **J Hart** ★72
8 (3) 52017-4 **HACKNEY DIAMONDS (7) (C)** I Williams 4 9-4 ........ **E Greatrex** 67
9 (9) 72/3485- **ROSCO ROGERS (30)** T Vaughan 4 9-3 ........ **C Hutchinson** 65

**VISOR: No. 7 CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 3, 4, 8.**

**SP FORECAST:** 2 Mr Nugget, 5 Hackney Diamonds, 6 Alnayef, Spec Of Light, 8 Rosco Rogers, Harlington, Lednikov, 25 Skycutter, 33 The Corporate Guy.

**2025: No corresponding race.**

## 8.30 WIN WITH BETMGM'S GOLDEN GOALS H'CAP 3YO
£3,768 (6) 6f 16yds (11)

1 (2) 56LL6-L **TICKETTOTHESTARS (16) (T)** B Millman 9-9 ........ **Doubtful** 49
2 (6) 53374-2 **MADEMOISELLE BELLE (16)** B Ellison 9-9 ........ **B Robinson** 61
3 (5) L026- **MYTHICAL NIGHT (37)** D Cunha 9-8 ........ **C Fallon** 56
4 (4) L44- **AL NAJASHI (49) (F)** Ollie Sangster 9-7 ........ **S Donohoe** ★62
5 (9) 322853- **WOODY Y FERNANDEZ (79)** J Candlish 9-6 ........ **G Wood** 60
6 (10) L6LL14- **CONTAINER EXPRESS (19) (D,F)** P Kirby 9-6 ........ **A Brookes(3)** 57
7 (1) 958547- **OH SO PERFECT (53)** M Appleby 9-3 ........ **A Rawlinson** 57
8 (8) 0659- **TRUCIAL PEARL (135)** M & D Easterby 9-3 ........ **Joanna Mason** 56
9 (3) 876- **MON PETIT FRERE (139)** J Parr 9-0 ........ **P J McDonald** 47
10 (7) 588- ● **SECOND AVENUE (70)** E Dunlop 9-0 ........ **C Shepherd** 51
11 (11) LL8- **RAI ROGERS (22)** I Furtado 9-0 ........ **J Hart** 45

**TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 4, 5, 9 CHEEK PIECES: No. 3.**

**SP FORECAST:** 5-2 Woody Y Fernandez, 5 Container Express, 6 Mademoiselle Belle, 7 Mythical Night, 8 Al Najashi, Oh So Perfect, 12 Second Avenue, 14 Trucial Pearl, 16 Others.

**2025: Little Bittern 9-8, Oliver Carmichael(7) 25-1 (E J-Houghton), drawn (5), 12 ran.**

**TRACK FACTS: GOING:** Standard. Left Handed. **TOP TRACK JOCKEY (2021-26):** Jason Hart 13% Strike rate. **TOP TRACK TRAINER (2021-26):** M Appleby 10% Strike rate. **FIRST TIME:** 5.00 Beaming Light (eye shields), 5.30 Fermain (tongue strap), 6.00 Mickey Mongoose (blinkers), Masham Moor (cheek pieces), 6.30 Yorkstone (blinkers), 7.30 Northern Spirit (wind surgery), 8.00 Spec Of Light (cheek pieces), 8.30 Mon Petit Frere (tongue strap), Al Najashi (tongue strap). **BEATEN FAVOURITES:** 6.30 Relevant Range. 7.00 Lorca's Waltz. 8.00 Mr Nugget(hcp). 8.30 Woody Y Fernandez. **DRAW:** No advantage. **LONGEST TRAVELLER: Alnayef** (8.00) 282 miles. **STABLE SWITCH:** 7.30 **Moonstone Boy** from I Jardine to J Candlish. 8.00 **Harlington** from J Tickle to Charlie Clover. 8.30 **Oh So Perfect** from C Fellowes to M Appleby.

## SPORT IN BRIEF

### DARTS

**BAHRAIN MASTERS** (Exhibition World Bahrain, Sakhir, Bahrain)—**Quarter Finals:** G Price (Wal) bt L Littler (Eng) 6-2, M Van Gerwen (Ned) bt S Bunting (Eng) 6-4, N Aspinall (Eng) bt L Humphries (Eng) 6-3, G Van Veen (Ned) bt D Noppert (Ned) 6-1. **Semi Finals:** M Van Gerwen (Ned) bt G Price (Wal) 7-2, G Van Veen (Ned) bt N Aspinall (Eng) 7-4.

### GOLF

**DP WORLD TOUR DUBAI INVITATIONAL** (Dubai, UAE)—**2nd rnd** (Gbr & Irl unless stated, Par 71): **137** I Elvira (Spa) 69 68, S Lowry 69 68, **139** D Puig (Spa) 67 72, M Armitage 69 70, **140** R McIlroy 66 74, T Lawrence (Rsa) 69 71, A Rozner (Fra) 68 72, A Ayora (Spa) 68 72.

**USPGA SONY OPEN** (Honolulu, Hawaii)—**1st rnd** (USA unless stated, Par 70): **62** K Roy, N Taylor (Can), **63** C Gotterup, B Griffin, Seong-Hyeon Kim (Kor), J VanDerLaan, **64** A Dumont (Bel), J Parry (Eng), A Smalley, **65** N Dunlap, H Hall (Eng), R Henley, K Kitayama, D McCarthy, M Meissner, A Svensson (Can).

### SNOOKER

**WST JOHNSTONE'S PAINT MASTERS** (Alexandra Palace, London)—**Qtr-Finals:** Y Wu (Chn) bt G Xiao (Chn) 6-0.

### TENNIS

**ATP & WTA ADELAIDE INT'NAL** (Adelaide, Australia)—**Semi Finals Men's:** T Machac (Cze) bt T Paul (USA) 2-6 6-3 6-3; U Humbert (Fra) bt A Davidovich Fokina (Spa) 6-3 5-7 7-6 (7-4). **Women's:** V Mboko (Can) bt K Birrell (Aus) 6-2 6-1; M Andreeva (Rus) bt D Shnaider (Rus) 6-3 6-2.

**ATP ASB CLASSIC** (Auckland, New Zealand)—**Semi Finals:** J Mensik (Cze) bt F Marozsan (Hun) 7-6 (11-9) 4-6 6-1; S Baez (Arg) bt M Giron (USA) 6-1 6-4.

**WTA HOBART INTERNATIONAL** (Hobart, Australia)—**Semi Finals:** E Cocciaretto (Ita) bt A Ruzic (Cro) 6-3 6-2; I Jovic (USA) bt T Preston (Aus) 4-6 6-4 6-1.

## TODAY'S DIARY

### ICE HOCKEY

**Elite League:** Belfast Giants v Sheffield Steelers, Cardiff Devils v Manchester Storm, Dundee Stars v Coventry Blaze, Guildford Flames v Fife Flyers.

### RUGBY UNION

**Investec Champions Cup Pool 1** (5.30)**:** Sharks v Clermont Auvergne (1pm), Toulouse v Sale. **Pool 2** (5.30)**:** Gloucester v Toulon (8pm), Munster v Castres.**Pool 3** (3.15)**:** Bayonne v Leinster, Stormers v Leicester.

**European Challenge Cup Pool 1** (8pm)**:** Black Lion v Zebre (1pm), Connacht v Montauban, Ospreys v Montpellier. **Pool 2** (5.30)**:** Perpignan v Lions. **Pool 3** (1pm)**:** Ulster v Stade Francais.

**Champ Rugby** (3pm)**:** Chinnor v Bedford.

**National League 1** (3pm)**:** Bishop's Stortford v Rotherham Titans, Clifton v Sedgley Park, Dings Crusaders v Birmingham Moseley, Leicester Lions v Plymouth Albion (2pm), Rosslyn Park v Blackheath, Tonbridge Juddians v Rams (2pm).

**Arnold Clark Scottish Premiership** (2pm)**:** GHA v Heriot's Rugby Club, Hawick v Ayr (3pm), Kelso v Glasgow Hawks (3pm), Watsonians v Currie.

## TOMORROW

### BASKETBALL

**Super League:** Bristol Flyers v Leicester Riders, Cheshire Phoenix v Surrey 89ers, Manchester Basketball v Newcastle Eagles, Sheffield Sharks v London Lions.

### CRICKET

**Third One Day International:** India v New Zealand (Indore, 8am).

### ICE HOCKEY

**Elite League:** Coventry Blaze v Glasgow Clan, Fife Flyers v Dundee Stars, Guildford Flames v Cardiff Devils.

### RUGBY LEAGUE

**Betfred Championship** (3pm)**:** Midlands Hurricanes v Newcastle (2pm), Barrow v Workington (2pm), Doncaster v Halifax, Hunslet v Dewsbury, Keighley v Goole Vikings, London Broncos v Widnes, Whitehaven v Sheffield, Swinton v Rochdale.

### RUGBY UNION

**Investec Champions Cup Pool 1** (5.30)**:** Glasgow v Saracens. **Pool 3** (3.15)**:** La Rochelle v Harlequins. **Pool 4** (3.15)**:** Bristol v Bordeaux-Begles (1pm), Northampton v Scarlets.

**European Challenge Cup Pool 2** (1pm)**:** Lyon v Benetton Treviso. **Pool 3** (5.30)**:** Exeter v Cardiff Rugby (1pm), Racing 92 v Cheetahs.

### TENNIS

**Australian Open** (Melbourne Park, Melbourne, Australia).

**LOOKING AHEAD** Burke's Saracens have shot at topping pool

# Burke's Scot big chance to lay down the law

## GLASGOW v SARACENS

Champions Cup: Pool 1, 5.30pm tomorrow

# FERGUS ON A MISSION AHEAD OF SIX NATIONS

BY **ADAM HATHAWAY**

**FERGUS BURKE is aiming to make life easy for himself in Scotland's upcoming Six Nations camp – by getting one over Glasgow in the Champions Cup tomorrow.**

The Saracens fly-half lines up against the URC high-fliers, unbeaten in Europe this season, with the Londoners needing a point to guarantee a last-16 spot.

A win by the three-time Euro kings would really shake up Pool One and could leave Burke's men in pole position after their epic 20-14 win against Antoine Dupont's Toulouse last Sunday.

New Zealand-born Burke qualifies for Scotland through his late grandfather and made his debut for Gregor Townsend's side against Fiji last summer.

He was involved in the autumn win against Tonga, where he rubbed shoulders with several of Glasgow's big-hitters, including centre Sione Tuipulotu, and is desperate for a decent result tomorrow to take into camp with him the week after next.

Burke, 26, said: "It probably would make it a little bit more enjoyable. But it's going to potentially be a greater challenge than we had last week, so the big challenge is backing it up now.

"Glasgow are flying, they are a team full of internationals, it is in Glasgow and they don't lose many there.

"They're unbeaten in this competition and they're up there in the URC as well.

"I've played with them before – in that Tonga game, Sione was at 12, Stafford McDowall was at 13, Ollie Smith was part of it.

"So I know a little bit more of what to expect, but that doesn't mean it's going to be easier."

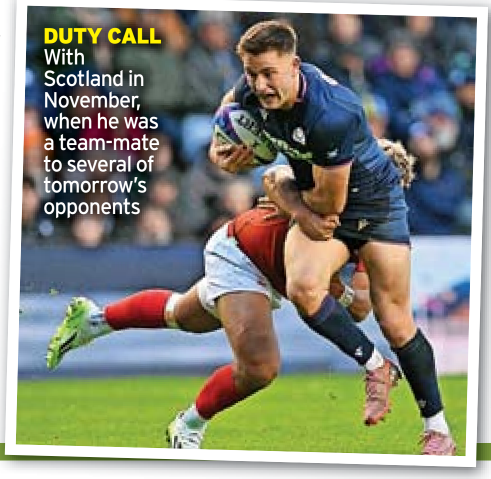
That win against Toulouse came against the backdrop of a dismal 36-28 defeat by Leicester the week before when director of rugby Mark McCall called out his squad's attitude.

The squad had a clear-the-air session ahead of the Toulouse clash but have to repeat the emotion of that day in Glasgow.

Burke added: "We didn't have our best game against Leicester and we weren't happy with what we put out on the field, and we've been a bit up and down this season and I guess the coaches put it on us.

"There was no better week to show our fans and staff what we're about and show each other what we're about. The real test now is we've done that, but we haven't won back-to-back games since rounds one and two of the Premiership, so we've done 25 percent of the challenge and the rest is backing it up."

Maro Itoje leads Saracens from lock with Owen Farrell restored to the starting line-up, at centre, after his influential cameo off the bench against Toulouse.



**DUTY CALL** With Scotland in November, when he was a team-mate to several of tomorrow's opponents

# Grounded Tigers are playing catch-up

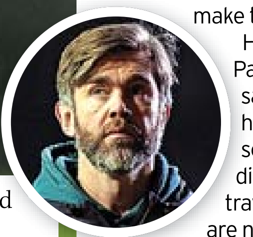
**Stormers v Leicester**
*Today, 3.15pm*

BY **ADAM HATHAWAY**

LEICESTER arrived in Cape Town 36 hours behind schedule ahead of today's do-or-die Champions Cup meeting with the Stormers.

Tigers had their Tuesday flights from Heathrow cancelled, with the squad then split into two groups to fly out on Wednesday.

That meant a trip up Table Mountain had to be cancelled but Tigers have a bigger hill to climb against Stormers, top of the URC, and must win well to make the last 16.



Head coach Parling (left) said: "We have had some disrupted travel but we are not dwelling on it. The first two Prem matches of the season the bus turned up late to away games, so we are not using it as an excuse."

Parling has rested England pair Ollie Chessum and Joe Heyes, while wing Adam Radwan is injured, which means James Thompson, Will Hurd and Gabriel Hamer-Webb all start.

Stormers sent a second team to Harlequins last week and were hammered 61-10 but big guns, including Springbok superstar fly-half Sacha Feinberg-Mngomezulu, are back.

Parling added: "Take away last week, that was a completely different side to the one we are facing, and they are unbeaten this season.

"There are sliding door moments in players' careers and this could be one of them."

## FORMULA 1

**LEWIS HAMILTON and Ferrari race engineer Riccardo Adami have been separated after one fractious season.**

**The British driver was forced to defend his relationship with Adami throughout last year, following a number of tense radio exchanges.**

**Ferrari said Adami has now been moved to a different role, and Hamilton, 41, will have an alternative race engineer when the new season gets under way in Australia on March 8.**

## WORLD OF SPORT

# Nix plots hero's fall

## NFL

BY **KEITH WEBSTER**

BO NIX aims to take a major scalp in the play-offs tonight – but admits he is in awe of "superhero" rival Josh Allen.

Quarterback Nix led the Denver Broncos to a spectacular 14-3 season – the joint-best in the NFL.

Opposite number Allen led Buffalo Bills to an underdog win over Jacksonville last week, so Nix knows what to expect with a final four place at stake.

"He's incredible," Nix said. "He goes out and does superhero stuff."

NIX

**TONIGHT:** Buffalo at Denver, 9.30pm; San Francisco at Seattle, 1am. **SUNDAY:** Houston at New England, 8pm; LA Rams at Chicago, 11.30pm

## SNOOKER

**HUNGRY Wu Yize chewed up chef Xiao Guodong to reach the Masters semi-finals.**

**Xiao, 36, had served up a steak dinner for young Wu, 22, on the eve of their quarter-final, then lost 6-0.**

**Debutant Wu, whose dad had surprised him by flying in from China, said: "My father has helped me since I was very young. It was great to have him here."**

**Judd Trump and John Higgins play their semi-final today (1pm, BBC).**

## 10 to tackle

1. Which Briton won women's 100m backstroke at the 2025 European Short Course Swimming Championships?
2. **Who have cricket side London Spirit appointed as their women's head coach for the 2026 edition of The Hundred?**
3. At which weight did Liverpudlian Tony Willis win boxing bronze at the 1980 Olympics?
4. **In what year were the Summer and Winter Olympic Games last both held in the same country (Germany)?**
5. Which Australian tennis player was Wimbledon men's singles champion in 1987?
6. **Which Brazilian runner won the men's 800m at the 1984 Olympics?**
7. Who was the first golfer to win four US Open Championships and is still the only man to win three consecutive titles?
8. **Which Cuban-born baseball player, who was AL MVP in 1988, published a 2005 book exposing the use of steroids?**
9. Who won the World Snooker Championship each time it was contested between 1957 and 1968?
10. **Of the three swords used in fencing which has the smallest hand guard?**

**RATINGS**
0-3 Oh dear
4-6 Small beer
7-9 So near
10 Sporting Seer

**ANSWERS:** 1 Lauren Cox. 2 Jon Lewis. 3 Light welterweight. 4 1936. 5 Pat Cash. 6 Joaquim Cruz. 7 Willie Anderson. 8 Jose Canseco. 9 John Pulman. 10 Foil.

# KATIE'S STRESSED FOR SUCCESS

## Boulter boosted by a promotion after tense wait

FROM **YASMIN SYED** in Melbourne

**KATIE BOULTER revealed her stressful start to the Australian Open after learning that she had made it into the main draw at the 11th hour.**

The British No.4 was expected to go through qualifying after dropping outside of the world's top 100 and was even placed in the draw.

But Boulter was quickly taken out when she got into the main field following several withdrawals. The world No.113 said: "I just did my best to focus on what I was doing, trying not to think too much about whether I was going to get in or out and just preparing for the Monday.

"I did a pretty good job of that, but don't get me wrong, it's been pretty stressful.

"I found out literally after the draw came out around 5pm [on Sunday].

"That was a pretty tough day in terms of just trying to keep straight and not think too much. It worked out eventually."

Boulter initially failed to make the entry cut for the Australian Open, but could have played a smaller event in December to fight for extra ranking points.

Now, the Brit wants the WTA Tour to implement a rule that would see the end-of-season rankings in November used for Australian Open entry lists – which the ATP have just introduced.

She said: "I noticed that the ATP have a final cut for the first time, this year on a certain date.

"I feel like the WTA should maybe follow that, because I'm kind of there, middle of my pre-season, wondering whether I should be going to play, because other people are playing.

"That's quite unsettling. It also really doesn't give a chance for the players to get a proper pre-season in."

Boulter is now hoping to wipe the slate clean in 2026 after struggling with injuries and loss of form last year – and she has a new coach, Michael Joyce.

After linking up at the end of last year, Boulter said: "I feel like it's going well at the moment.

"We're all quite calm, which really helps because I've got that energy around me, which is important for me as a tennis player. Everything is going well, and just really looking to build on what we've started."

And Boulter has another thing to look forward to this year - her wedding with world No.6 Alex de Minaur, even if there is still a lot to organise.

She said: "We've done absolutely nothing in about a year and two months. We've got a date. We've got a venue.

"I wouldn't say we're the most organised of couples. We're going with the flow, hoping everything works itself out, and we'll turn up and say 'I do', hopefully, and that's it.

"It's going to be an unbelievable year, one of the best ones in my life, no matter what happens on the tennis court."

**MAIN PRIORITY** Boulter managed to avoid having to qualify for the Australian Open after several players in the main draw withdrew

## Alcaraz: Split was Juan we agreed on

FROM **YASMIN SYED**

**CARLOS ALCARAZ has revealed where he stands with ex-coach Juan Carlos Ferrero following their sudden split last month.**

**The world No.1 sent shockwaves through the tennis world when he ended his partnership with Ferrero - which began when Alcaraz when was 15 - days after he won the ATP Coach of the Year award.**

**Announcing their decision to part ways in an emotional statement last month, former No.1 and Grand Slam champion Ferrero wrote: "I wish I could have continued."**

**But Alcaraz, who has retained the rest of his team, said: "With each chapter of life there is a time that has to be the end.**

**"I'm really grateful for this seven years I've been with Juan Carlos. I learnt a lot. Probably thanks to him, I'm the player that I am right now. But internally, we decided like this. We closed this chapter mutually. We are still friends, with a good relationship."**

## TEAM WORK A WAKE-UP CALL FOR CAM

FROM **YASMIN SYED**

**CAMERON NORRIE will need to get some much-needed rest ahead of the Australian Open after sleepless nights fuelled by fantasy football.**

**The British No.2 struggled after starting his season with tournaments in Brisbane and Auckland - but he is raring to go in Melbourne.**

**And Norrie says his jet lag was mostly caused by his desire to keep up with the Premier League - and his fantasy team - from Down Under.**

**The No.26 seed said: "I was getting up early, so in the first few nights I felt like I slept well. I was, like, 3am, ready to go.**

**"It didn't help there were a lot of Premier League matches at that time, and I was checking the scores.**

**"I was seeing all my Fantasy League players not scoring. I was so p***ed off, and I couldn't go back to sleep.**

**"That was a little bit to do with my Fantasy more than the actual jet lag and the Premier League matches.**

**"We did our best, and we're in a good routine of waking up early, and I quite like that rather than being tough to wake up.**

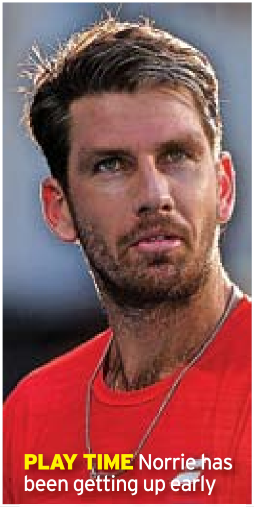
**"Then again, it was nice to come from New Zealand to here. We're here early, but the jet lag was to our advantage at this time. We're here, practised, and done."**

**The British tennis pack has its own fantasy football league - LTA coach James Trotman is leading - and Norrie added: "There's not too much banter, but just we're following all the matches.**

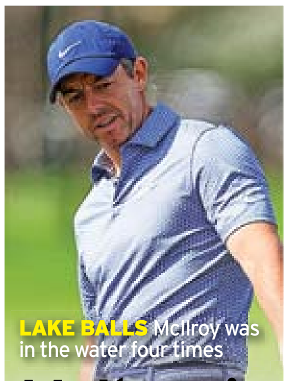
**"It's a good way to stay on top of it. I'm doing it more with my team. It's good fun." Norrie will now turn his attention to his first-round opponent, Frenchman Benjamin Bonzi, who beat him in the 2024 Metz final.**

**The Brit added: "I think it's a nice first round. He's not going to blast you off the court. You're not going to have no rhythm.**

**"I think [there's] quite a clear strategy for me and the way I want to play points, but I'm going to have to execute. It's going to be difficult."**



**PLAY TIME** Norrie has been getting up early



**LAKE BALLS** McIlroy was in the water four times

## McIlroy is blown off course

GOLF

BY **NEIL McLEMAN**

RORY McILROY found water four times in the desert as Shane Lowry shared the halfway lead at the Dubai Invitational.

The Masters champion led the 60-man field after his opening 66.

But the world No.2 found it tough in windy conditions yesterday as he got wet on the 6th, 13th, 14th and 17th holes for his 74.

His playing partner and Ryder Cup team-mate Lowry shot a controlled 68 take the lead, along with Spain's Nacho Elivra on five-under par.

World No.26 Lowry, who last won the DP World Tour in 2022, said: "Very happy. I knew it was gonna be really hard and second round of the year, you don't really want this, but I'm very happy.

"If I play golf like that for the rest of the season in that frame of mind, I'll be pretty good.

"The first tournament of the year you don't know what to expect. So going out there in the last group now on Saturday is nice, we'll see what happens."

And the Irishman said playing – and being pals – with McIlroy was helping him become a better player at the age of 38.

"I suppose I'm so comfortable around him as well," said Lowry. "So when I'm paired with him, I don't get too flustered.

"And when you're able to just hang out with him day-to-day and week-to-week and see what he does to make himself better, it kind of drives you on to be a better person yourself."

Marcus Armitage followed his opening 69 with a 70 to sit two shots off the lead, while McIlroy is in a four-way tie in fifth place on two-under par.

Defending champion Tommy Fleetwod carded five bogeys and a double bogey in a seven-over 78 at the no-cut tournament.

# Tough Forest the ones to watch for Gunners

### NOTTM FOREST v ARSENAL

Premier League: Today, KO 5.30pm

BY **TOM CANTON**

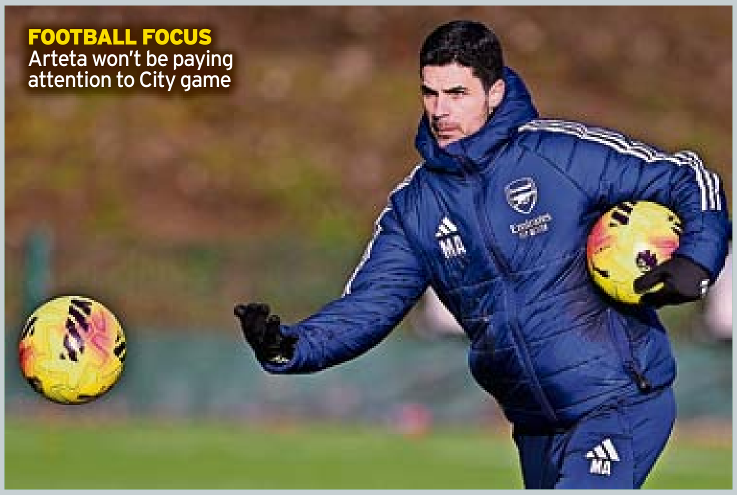
MIKEL ARTETA says Nottingham Forest – not Manchester City – will have his full attention this evening.

Pep Guardiola's side face a derby day at Old Trafford in today's early kick-off, where a win would narrow the gap at the top to three points before the Gunners play.

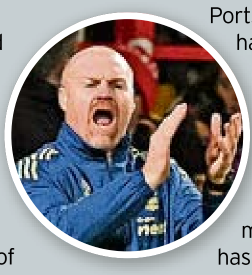
However, Arteta is adamant that his Arsenal players will be blinkered on the job at hand in Nottingham.

"We can only focus on what we can do," Arteta said. "When the games are earlier, you have the possibility to see them.

"The only focus and the aim is to prepare for a tough match, and we have experienced that over there, and we have to win it."



**FOOTBALL FOCUS** Arteta won't be paying attention to City game



Dyche's brief tenure at the City Ground has seen a spectrum of results, from winning at Anfield to being knocked out of the FA Cup by Championship side Wrexham.

That said, Arteta believes he has spotted a response from the Forest players just by the introduction of Dyche as their head coach.

"A top coach, really good at what he does," Arteta said. "You can see straight away the increase in sprints.

"The way they play, the results that they got against some of the big teams as well, how difficult they are, constantly. [They're] so experienced in the league."

This is the third of four successive away fixtures in 10 days for Arsenal. Coming through the trips to Portsmouth and Chelsea, having scored seven goals, is a reason for encouragement.

However, perhaps uncharacteristically, the Gunners have conceded three times. The Arsenal manager admitted that he has had to look several games ahead while preparing for this gauntlet.

"In certain things, yes, and especially looking at the opponents and the things that we're going to be able to train, or what we can replicate in those games," he said.

"Ideally, we want to plan, 'OK, for this game we think this player could be better'. Sometimes it's just impossible, and you have to go game by game. We have more players back now, we have better options, and that's very helpful."

Dyche (left) is looking to add goals to his squad in their fight against relegation, but admits strikers are the hardest thing to find in the transfer market.

Igor Jesus is carrying the burder since the decision to loan Arnaud Kalimuendo to Eintracht Frankfurt. Chris Wood is injured and Taiwo Awoniyi out of favour.

Dyche said: "Mainly, strikers naturally evolve. Of course you can teach them the basics, but smelling a goal is almost undefinable.

"It's a very difficult process for strikers and teaching them.

"You can teach them the basic principles, but the moment of truth and how to find the moment of truth is the hardest thing."

# SLOT PATIENT AS REDS WAIT FOR RIGHT MOVE

### LIVERPOOL v BURNLEY

Premier League: Today, KO 3pm

BY **PAUL GORST**

ARNE SLOT insisted Liverpool will "wait for the right moment" to add to their squad as the head coach refused to rule out strengthening before the January transfer window closes.

Season-ending injuries to Giovanni Leoni and Conor Bradley have led to calls for the Reds to bolster their defensive ranks.

But summer target Marc Guehi - who had a medical on deadline day in the summer before Crystal Palace pulled the plug on the £35million deal - is now off to Manchester City.

City have already signed Bournemouth forward Antoine Semenyo, who was also linked with the champions.

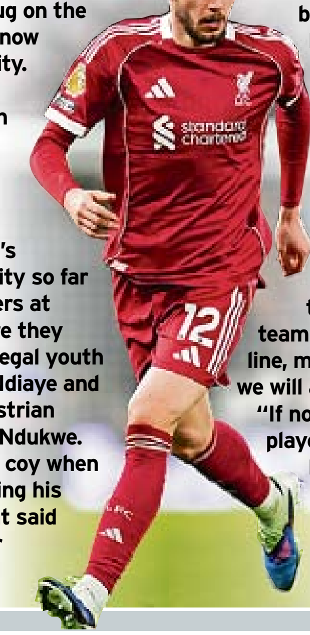
Instead, Liverpool's winter window activity so far has been on teenagers at academy level, where they have brought in Senegal youth defender Mor Talla Ndiaye and are closing in on Austrian centre-back Ifeanyi Ndukwe.

Slot was typically coy when asked about bolstering his ranks this month but said he, sporting director Richard Hughes and others in charge of recruitment, are all on the same page.

"Everyone knows what the challenges are, and we all agree but that is not to say there is no possibility for us to act because this club has always waited for the right moment and never from a position of panic," Slot said.

"If the right player arrives for multiple reasons no matter what the position in our team - it could be last line, midfield or attack - we will act.

"If not, we do it with the players we have because Wata [Wataru Endo] has come back now as well.



**PAINFUL BLOW** Bradley will miss the rest of the season

"At this moment there are only three players who are out with long term injuries [Leoni, Bradley and Alexander Isak]. [We won't move] unless it's an opportunity or a chance in the market."

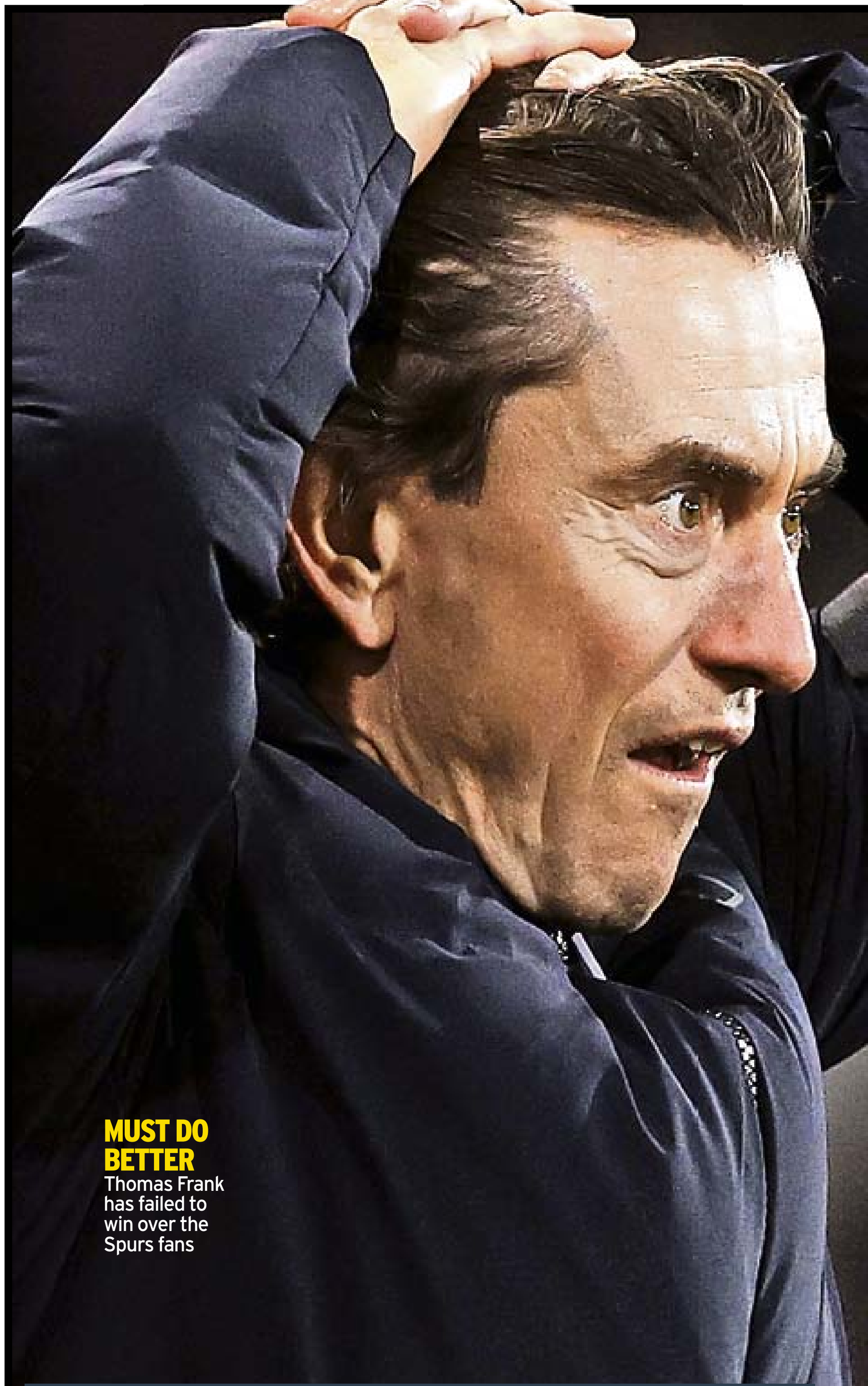
On the prospect of players leaving this month, Slot added: "If another club makes the right offer - and I don't include only me, I include the sporting directors and our owners - then we can make a decision we all agree on."

Liverpool host a struggling Burnley today with head coach Scott Parker admitting occasional lapses in concentration have been a "killer" this season – and they have to cut them out as they fight for survival.

Nine defeats in a 13-match winless run have left the Clarets eight points from safety and Parker has called for the focus to be sharpened.

He said: "You need to understand what you are up against and you can't switch off as this is a deadly league.

"This year at times we have switched off at certain moments and it's been a killer for us."



**MUST DO BETTER** Thomas Frank has failed to win over the Spurs fans

# NO DOUBTING THOMAS AFTER BIG CONOR CALL

BY **ALASDAIR GOLD**

THOMAS FRANK believes Tottenham have made a clear statement of backing him ahead of a big derby against fellow strugglers West Ham.

The Dane has faced a tough time, with long-term injuries, the team sitting 14th in the Premier League and just two wins from their past 13 matches.

Spurs supporters have let Frank know what they think, but it has been a positive week inside the club for Frank, with Spurs signing Conor Gallagher (right) from Atletico Madrid.

The head coach played his part with a key phone call to the 25-year-old England midfielder, explaining his role within his team and the project going forward under him.

Frank also led the drive to bring in John Heitinga as his assistant manager this week.

With those two key additions and the decision to sell last season's top scorer Brennan Johnson, Frank was asked whether it was all evidence of the club supporting his vision.

"Yes, definitely. I think it's a very good sign of it," said Frank.

"We know January is a tricky window to sign a quality player like Conor, I think it's a great sign of that.

"Also to sign John Heitinga, who is a skilful coach, that he believes in the project and the vision from me, from the club, in a moment where from the outside doesn't look as smooth but from the inside looks a little bit more positive."

# LONDON FALLING

**TOTTENHAM v WEST HAM**
Premier League: KO 3pm

# Heads on block as basketcase clubs do battle in El Sackico

BY **NEIL McLEMAN**

**TOTTENHAM and West Ham share more than a bitter rivalry and recently winning European trophies.**

Both managers are under huge pressure going into today's London derby after poor transfers and worse results have fuelled fan unrest.

Spurs are out of the domestic cups and in 14th place in the Premier League after one win in six.

West Ham have gone 10 league games without a win and are seven points from safety in 18th place.

Asked if Thomas Frank has to win today to stay in his job, former Spurs boss Tim Sherwood told Sky Sports: "No more than Nuno Espirito Santo has to win to stay in charge at West Ham. It is El Sackico."

### This is where it has all gone wrong:

**Confused managerial turnover**

David Moyes won the UEFA Conference League in May 2023 – West Ham's first major trophy in 43 years – but was gone the following year.

Seeking more attacking football, the Hammers appointed and then sacked Julen Lopetegui and Graham Potter. They have now gone back to defensive-first Nuno Espirito Santo, who is more like Moyes.

Spurs took even less time to fire Ange Postecoglou after he won the Europa League last season, having finished 17th in the Premier League.

**Bad transfer dealings**

The cautionary tale was Tottenham selling Gareth Bale to Real Madrid for £85m in 2013 and buying Roberto Soldado and Erik Lamela, among seven new signings who failed to fire.

West Ham banked £105m for Declan Rice in 2023 and spent £30m on James Ward-Prowse and £35m on Edson Alvarez. No team ever gets better by selling their best player. Both clubs have spent big – but badly.

**Star quality**

How many players would get in the teams of the title contenders?

For West Ham, Jarrod Bowen and Lucas Paqueta on his old form. For Tottenham, Pedro Porro and maybe Micky van de Ven. Crystal Palace have more.

**Fan discontent**

West Ham supporters have been calling for owner David Sullivan and vice-chair Karren Brady to go.

Both sets of fans want attacking football, but survival is now the priority for the Hammers.

Spurs fans finally got their way when chairman Daniel Levy stepped down in September. But Thomas Frank's style of football has not pleased fans at a club where the motto is: To Dare Is To Do.

**Injuries and absent Brazilians**

Tottenham have missed Dominic Solanke, James Maddison, Dejan Kulusevski and Rodrigo Bentancur – now Richarlison is out for seven weeks with a hamstring strain.

Paqueta has not been the same for the Hammers since his 2023 move to Man City collapsed after spot-fixing allegations.

**Looking for January saviours**

Both clubs have been active in this window. Spurs spent £34.7m to sign England star Conor Gallagher from Atletico Madrid and hope to bring in Brazilian left-back Souza.

Argentine Taty Castellanos scored his first West Ham goal in the FA Cup and Brazilian substitute Pablo looked good.

**So is it a must-win?**

Nuno said: "No, it's a game. But we have to realise that each game is important for us."

Frank said: "There is a lot of noise, I know because I've been told and I'm not stupid."

# NUNO'S HOPING EX-FACTOR CAN SPUR REVIVAL

BY **NEIL McLEMAN**

NUNO ESPIRITO SANTO will return to Tottenham today for his third ex-factor clash of the month aiming only to "please our fans".

West Ham sit seven points from safety after losing to relegation rivals Wolves and Nottingham Forest in their last two Premier League matches. The Portuguese manager enjoyed success at both clubs.

But he lasted only 17 unhappy games in North London in 2021 before he was sacked. "It was an honour and a pleasure to manage Spurs," said Nuno (left).

"Things didn't go well. It's the third game in a row we face clubs that I managed before.

"Nothing changed. It's a new game. It's a tough opponent in a tough place and we need a good result. Our focus is there to go and compete." The Hammers have appointed Nuno's former Deportivo La Coruna team-mate Paco Jemez as their new first-team coach.

"We've known each other for many, many years," said Nuno.

"He's a vocal guy and we need all the help we can get. Paco brings something only Paco has."

# Oliver exit agreed in October

**FROM BACK PAGE**

dropped his bombshell to his players yesterday and it puts him in the frame for the Manchester United job, as he is on their shortlist.

Just minutes later he said the club had agreed a deal for Guehi. City manager Pep Guardiola has been desperate to sign the 25-year-old, but the deal is remarkable because the centre-half would be a free agent in the summer.

City have had to pay £20m with the fee rising to £30m, but it is loaded with add-ons and incentives.

Glasner insisted Guehi's move was not linked to his own and he agreed months ago with chairman Steve Parish that he would leave at the end of his contract.

Glasner said: "I had a meeting with Steve in the October international break over dinner. I told the team today the same."

On Guehi, the Austrian said: "Everyone wanted Marc Guehi to stay forever.

"I wish him all the best for the rest of his career."

Glasner also warned France striker Mateta could go if an offer comes in and he does not commit to a new deal.

Glasner added: "There will be a price where Crystal Palace say '18 months left in his contract, we do the deal if JP wants.'"

❑PALACE have been drawn against HSK Zrinjski Mostar, of Bosnia Herzegovina, in their Europa Conference League play-off.

# Cats still target 40

**Sunderland v C Palace**
*Today, Kick-Off 3pm*

REGIS LE BRIS claimed that Sunderland are still all about the safety-first mark of 40 points – despite their strong top-flight return.

The Black Cats have already earned 30 points from their opening 21 league games – and they stood 16 points clear of the relegation zone ahead of today's top-flight fixtures.

But Sunderland boss Le Bris said: "The target remains the same for us.

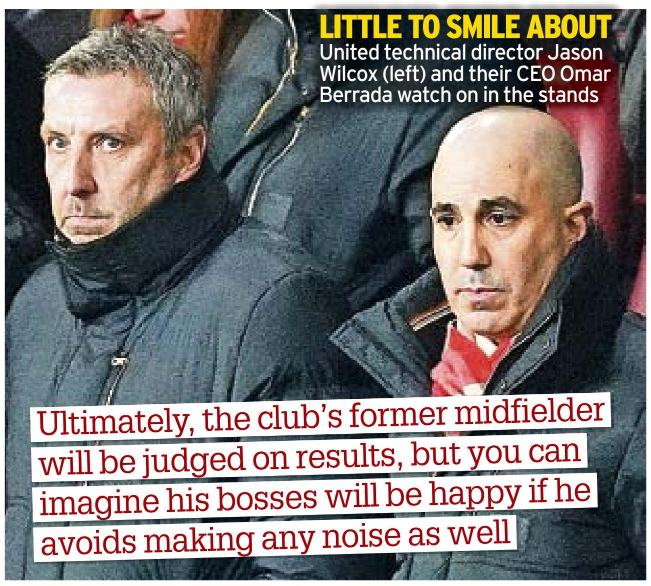
"We have our own target, we want to reach those 40 points. It's not done yet and if we reach this target, we'll set another straight away.

"So far it's not done and I repeat, we don't expect anything from the opponents. We want to build our season and we still have points to win."

# UNITED'S SAFETY CARR

After loose-lipped Amorim's press conference carnage, the new boss provided a snorefest that would have left besieged Berrada and Wilcox exchanging high fives

**PLENTY TO SAY** Former United boss Amorim did not hold back when talking to the media



**LITTLE TO SMILE ABOUT** United technical director Jason Wilcox (left) and their CEO Omar Berrada watch on in the stands

> Ultimately, the club's former midfielder will be judged on results, but you can imagine his bosses will be happy if he avoids making any noise as well

**MAN UNITED v MAN CITY**
Premier League: Kick-off 12.30pm

BY **TYRONE MARSHALL**

**AS Michael Carrick sat down for his first press conference, you could quite easily imagine the scene.**

Omar Berrada and Jason Wilcox gathered around one of the TVs at Carrington's open-plan set-up, watching the latest Manchester United head coach speak to the media.

It's been a moment of the week that the club's hierarchy haven't exactly been looking forward to in recent times.

But if Ruben Amorim was the press conference equivalent of Bazball, capable of going on the attack at any of the deliveries he would face, then Carrick was the next man in when all that unravels.

The equivalent of losing an Ashes series 4-1 and deciding you need someone to show the straightest of straight bats.

That is exactly what Carrick did when the cameras rolled for the first press conference of his second spell in charge at Old Trafford.

In November 2021, his pre-match press conferences were held on Zoom. In person, he would watch the ball, then drop it safely at his feet.

You could say the end of the Amorim era was categorised by press conference broadsides, but they were simply more spectacular at the end.

Throughout his reign, he would throw in grenades when speaking to the media. From criticism of players to calling his squad "maybe the worst Manchester United team in history", the Portuguese was a headline-making machine.

United didn't want any more of that. Wilcox quickly decided he wanted someone who knew the club to take over for the rest of the season.

Carrick was the coach with the biggest upside, the one whose potential remains unexplored. The 44-year-old is also a safe pair of hands.

Across a little over four minutes and five questions while the cameras were rolling, he gave nothing away.

Berrada and Wilcox would have been clinking glasses and exchanging high fives. There were a couple of questions in there that could have made headlines: his conversations with the owners and Roy Keane's unnecessary criticism of his wife. Carrick negotiated them both safely.

He offered almost no insight into what he had said to Sir Jim Ratcliffe and the Glazers and claimed he wasn't bothered by Keane's dig at his wife Lisa.

Even the questions about football were dealt with.

Success would simply be improving. He also said that Wilcox and Berrada had laid no expectations for the rest of the Premier League season.

Given United's ambitions clearly remain to qualify for Europe and that Darren Fletcher had laid down the Champions League as a challenge last Sunday, that seems unlikely.

But Carrick's approach was to try to avoid heaping any pressure on the squad.

Carrick may have hinted at his approach to media dealings in his first response.

Asked how he had found his first few days back and what it was like to be sitting in the media chair, he said: "Two very different roles sat in this chair in front of you lot, it's very different to the role in coaching."

Ultimately, the ex-United midfielder will be judged on results, but you can imagine his bosses will be happy if he avoids making any noise as well.

After the chaotic Amorim era, they need stability. And if Carrick provides that on and off the pitch, then they will be delighted.

**TEAMS:** PULLOUT PAGE 8

## KEANE'S JIBES

FROM BACK PAGE

Carrick said: "It didn't bother me," before insisting the ex-United players such as Keane (right) talking about the club in the media were not making his job harder. "They're not putting more pressure on me, I don't feel that. There's plenty of opinions around, some are positive, some aren't so much.

"In terms of you saying about putting pressure, it's totally irrelevant in terms of how I go to work."

**ON THE FENCE** Carrick looking relaxed during his first United press conference yesterday

He offered almost no insight into what he had said to Sir Jim Ratcliffe and the Glazers and claimed he wasn't bothered by Keane's uncalled-for attack on wife Lisa

**DERBY DAY** Guardiola's out to hurt United today

# PEP: RESULTS THE ONLY WAY TO KEEP JOB, MICHAEL

BY **SIMON BAJKOWSKI**

PEP GUARDIOLA said that results are the only way that managers keep jobs – as he prepared to face his sixth different Manchester United coach of his time in England.

Guardiola arrived at the Etihad in 2016 and today takes Manchester City to Old Trafford, where Michael Carrick will lead United for the first time since being appointed as coach until the summer.

Ruben Amorim was hailed as one of the brightest coaches in Europe when he arrived last season and won at the Etihad early on in his reign, but exited the club this month.

United have hired a number of ex-Manchester City staff into senior positions since Sir Jim Ratcliffe bought into the club, yet they still appear to be no closer to reaching their neighbours' levels.

City's structure has allowed Guardiola to thrive, but he was clear ahead of the derby that the biggest, most reliable safety net for managers is simply winning matches.

"Results," said Guardiola. "If you don't win, you are sacked. We won a lot, that's why I'm still sitting here.

"Here, a little bit more, they are patient but there is no other secret. In other clubs, last season I would not be here any more.

"They were patient, but also [it's about] what we had done in the past.

"We had two or three bad months and the rest was correct but maybe in other clubs I would not be here.

"Everything else we have done is extraordinary, that's why I am still here."

The fact that Carrick has not yet picked a United team this season leaves Guardiola in the dark on how they could line up.

"If you don't have more info of the opponent, you focus on yourself and the players," Guardiola said.

"You can have some ideas of what Middlesbrough has done or when Michael was in his part before as a manager at Manchester United.

"But tactics is about the players and they are different to Middlesbrough ones.

"And I don't have a timeout to call after 10 minutes of the match so I can tell my players about what Michael wants to do.

"When you don't have information it's better to focus on yourself.

"Take the game we played against Chelsea recently, with their new manager.

"The first half was completely different to how they played in the second half. That's why you have to focus on yourself."

Guardiola is waiting to see if Nico Gonzalez (below) can return to action here.

The midfielder missed the Carabao Cup win at Newcastle United on Tuesday having picked up a knock in the draw with Brighton on January 7.

"Nico's injured. He didn't recover well, he made an effort but it's a step back," added Guardiola.

Nico O'Reilly started in his absence at St James' Park, with Rodri (above) coming off the bench; the latter will be lined up to start today if he is fit.

Guardiola is already missing seven players. Omar Marmoush is still on AFCON duty with Egypt.

Centre-backs Ruben Dias, Josko Gvardiol and John Stones are injured; Oscar Bobb, Savinho, and Mateo Kovacic are long-term absentees.

## 1-2-X GUIDE

(3 unless stated)

**TODAY**

**PREMIER LEAGUE**

(2) Chelsea v Brentford..........................

(3) Leeds v Fulham..........................

(4) Liverpool v Burnley..........................

(5) Man Utd v Man City (12.30)..........................

(6) Nottingham Forest v Arsenal (5.30).

(7) Sunderland v Crystal Palace..........................

(8) Tottenham v West Ham..........................

**SKY BET CHAMPIONSHIP**

(10) Charlton v Sheff Utd..........................

(11) Coventry v Leicester (12.30)..........................

(12) Ipswich v Blackburn (12.30)..........................

(13) Oxford Utd v Bristol City..........................

(14) Preston v Derby..........................

(15) Sheff Wed v Portsmouth..........................

(16) Southampton v Hull..........................

(17) Stoke v QPR..........................

(18) Swansea v Birmingham (5.30)..........................

(19) Watford v Millwall (12.30)..........................

(20) Wrexham v Norwich..........................

**SKY BET LEAGUE ONE**

(21) AFC Wimbledon v Doncaster..........................

(22) Barnsley v Blackpool..........................

(23) Bradford v Cardiff (12.30)..........................

(24) Burton v Huddersfield..........................

(25) Exeter v Stevenage..........................

(26) Leyton Orient v Reading..........................

(27) Luton v Lincoln City..........................

(28) Mansfield v Port Vale..........................

(29) Northampton v Wycombe..........................

(30) Peterborough v Plymouth..........................

Stockport v Rotherham..........................

(31) Wigan v Bolton (12.30)..........................

**SKY BET LEAGUE TWO**

(32) Accrington Stanley v MK Dons..........................

(33) Bristol Rovers v Colchester..........................

(34) Chesterfield v Bromley (12.30)..........................

(35) Crawley Tn v Notts County..........................

(36) Crewe v Barrow..........................

(37) Fleetwood Tn v Cambridge Utd..........................

(38) Gillingham v Newport County..........................

(39) Grimsby v Barnet..........................

(40) Oldham v Cheltenham..........................

(41) Shrewsbury v Harrogate..........................

(42) Swindon v Salford City..........................

(43) Tranmere v Walsall (12.30)..........................

**SCOTTISH CUP FOURTH ROUND**

Airdrieonians v Arbroath..........................

Camelon v Elgin..........................

(45) Dundee Utd v Ayr..........................

(46) Dunfermline v Hibernian (12.30)..........................

Hearts v Falkirk (8)..........................

Kelty Hearts v Cove Rangers..........................

(47) Kilmarnock v Dundee..........................

(48) Livingston v St Mirren..........................

(49) Motherwell v Ross County..........................

Partick v Montrose..........................

Spartans v Inverness CT..........................

Stenhousemuir v Morton..........................

Stranraer v Queen's Park..........................

**SCOTTISH LEAGUE ONE**

Peterhead v Hamilton..........................

**SCOTTISH LEAGUE TWO**

Stirling v East Kilbride..........................

**Enterprise National:** Brackley v Yeovil, Braintree v Boreham Wood, Eastleigh v Aldershot, Halifax v Boston, Gateshead v Rochdale, Hartlepool v Altrincham (12.30, Morecambe v Scunthorpe, Solihull Moors v Carlisle, Sutton v Forest Green, Truro v Tamworth, Wealdstone v Woking, York v Southend (5.30).

**Enterprise North:** Fylde v Scarborough, Bedford Tn v Southport, Buxton v Marine, Chester v Chorley, Curzon A v Telford, Darlington v Alfreton, Kidderminster v Worksop Tn, King's Lynn v Hereford, Macclesfield FC v Oxford C, Merthyr v Peterborough S, South Shields v Leamington, Spennymoor v Radcliffe.

**Enterprise South:** Chelmsford v W-S-Mare, Chippenham v Ebbsfleet, Dag & Red v Salisbury, Dover v Bath, Farnborough v Chesham, Hampton & R v Dorking, Hemel Hempstead v Slough, Hornchurch v Eastbourne, Maidenhead v Enfield, Tonbridge v AFC Totton, Torquay v Maidstone, Worthing v Horsham.

**Northern Premier:** Bamber Bridge v Hyde Utd, FC United v Warrington, Gainsborough Trinity v Morpeth, Hebburn Tn v Ashton, Ilkeston Tn v Lancaster, Leek Tn v Cleethorpes Tn, Prescot Cables v Whitby Tn, Rushall v Stocksbridge P S, Stockton Tn v Hednesford, Warrington Rylands v Guiseley.

**Southern Premier South:** Berkhamsted v Basingstoke Tn, Bracknell Tn v Sholing, Chertsey Tn v Dorchester, Farnham Tn v Evesham Utd, Gosport v Taunton, Havant & W v Gloucester, Poole v Yate, Tiverton v Hanwell Tn, Uxbridge v Plymouth Parkway, Weymouth v Walton & Hersham, Wimborne v Hungerford.

**Premier Central:** AFC Sudbury v Harborough Tn, Banbury v St Ives, Barwell v Real Bedford, Bury Tn v Bromsgrove, Halesowen v Royston, Kettering v Alvechurch, Leiston v Stourbridge, Needham Market v Stratford, Quorn v Spalding Utd, Redditch Utd v Bishop's Stortford, Worcester v Stamford.

**Isthmian Premier:** Billericay v Brentwood Tn, Canvey Island v Welling, Carshalton v Chatham Tn, Chichester City v Wingate & F, Cray Valley (PM) v Potters Bar, Dartford v Aveley, Dulwich v Cheshunt, Folkestone v Burgess Hill Tn, Hashtag United v Cray, Ramsgate v Lewes, St Albans v Whitehawk.

**TOMORROW**

**PREMIER LEAGUE**

(1) Aston Villa v Everton (4.30)..........................

(9) Wolverhampton v Newcastle (2)..........................

**SCOTTISH CUP FOURTH ROUND**

(44) Aberdeen v Raith (2.30)..........................

Auchinleck Talbot v Celtic (5.30)..........................

**MONDAY**

**PREMIER LEAGUE**

Brighton v AFC Bournemouth (8)..........................

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# NO FEAR OVER EX FACTOR

## Carrick shrugs off jibes from Keane and Co

BY **STEVEN RAILSTON**

**MICHAEL CARRICK swatted away Roy Keane's dig at his wife and claimed criticism from ex-Manchester United players will not bother him.**

Former Old Trafford captain Keane reignited an old feud when he said this week that Carrick's wife, Lisa, had a "bit of a big mouth". He appeared to be referring to a now-deleted profane social media post she made 12 years ago about what she thought of Keane after he criticised Carrick (left) in a Champions League game.

But as he prepared for today's Manchester derby as interim manager,

TURN TO PAGE 78, COLUMN 3

# PALACE IN WANDER LAND

## Glasner's exit bombshell as Guehi set for City.. and Mateta could leave too

**LONG GOODBYE** Glasner will leave this summer at the end of his Palace contract

SUNDERLAND V CRYSTAL PALACE
PREMIER LEAGUE KICK-OFF 3PM

BY **JOHN CROSS**

**OLIVER GLASNER has sparked a Crystal Palace exodus by confirming he will quit in the summer.**

Palace captain Marc Guehi (right) will be even quicker out of the door, as Manchester City have agreed a £30million deal for the England defender.

And striker Jean-Philippe Mateta (left) could also be on his way, as his contract has just 18 months left and Palace may feel forced to cash in. Glasner dropped

TURN TO PAGE 77, COLUMN 6

**BOOST** Boulter got into main draw after tense wait

## KATIE GETS TO SKIP 'Q'

AUSTRALIAN OPEN: PAGE 75

## Under-pressure bosses clash in 'El Sackico'

SPURS V WEST HAM: P76-77

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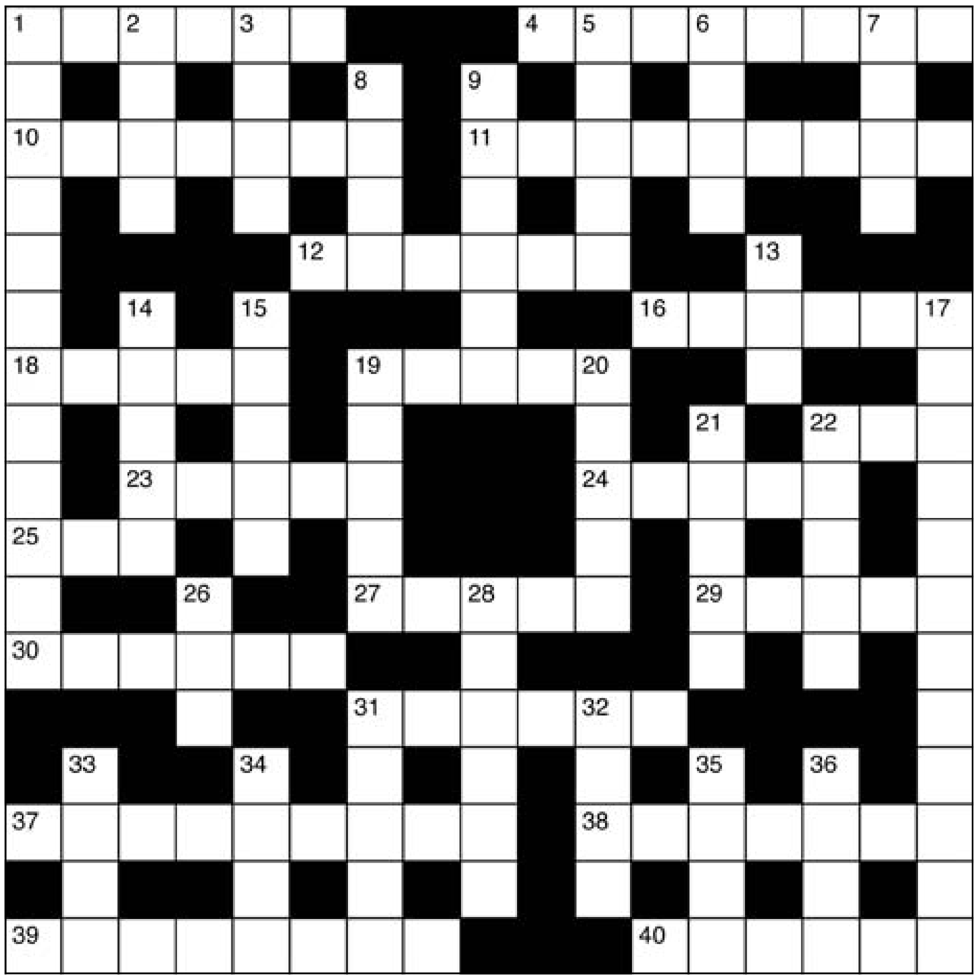

## ACROSS

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10 Killing Me Softly With His Song singer, _ Flack (7)
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6 Mr Winton, original Supermarket Sweep presenter (4)
7 One quarter of the League of Gentlemen, _ Gatiss (4)
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9 Punk'd prankster and star of Two and a Half Men, _ Kutcher (6)
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14 _ Starr, the Beatles' drummer (5)
15 First name of Will Smith's son (5)
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19 US personality Taye _ (5)
20 Mononymous Make You Feel My Love singer (5)
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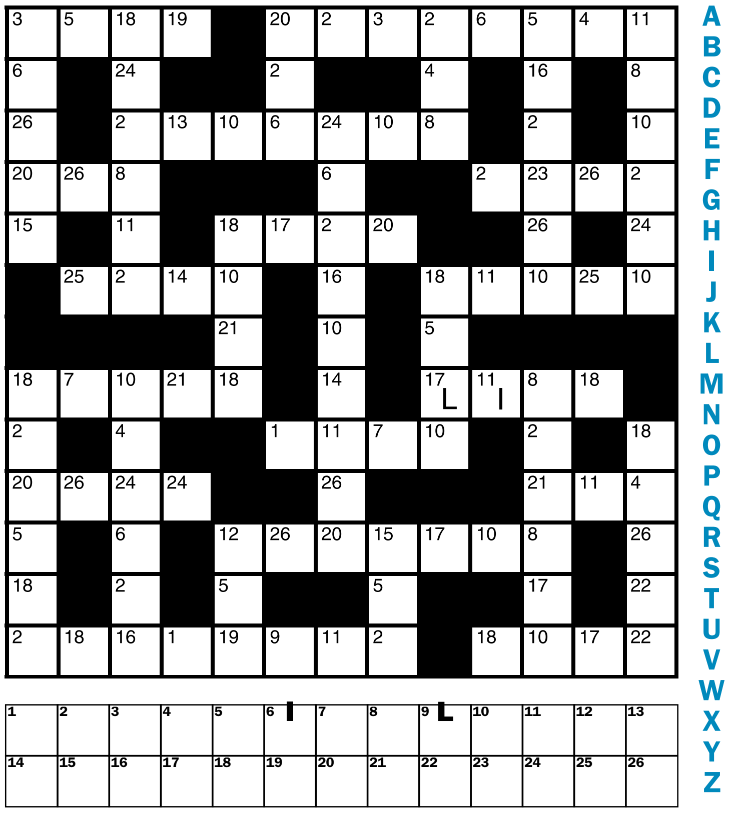
31 US designer, Zac _ (5)
32 Artist who released the album Life in Cartoon Motion (4)
33 Donnie Darko and Sucker Punch actress _ Malone (4)
34 New Zealand DJ, _ Lowe (4)
35 Actress and singer, _ Kendrick (4)
36 The Dark Knight star, Christian _ (4)

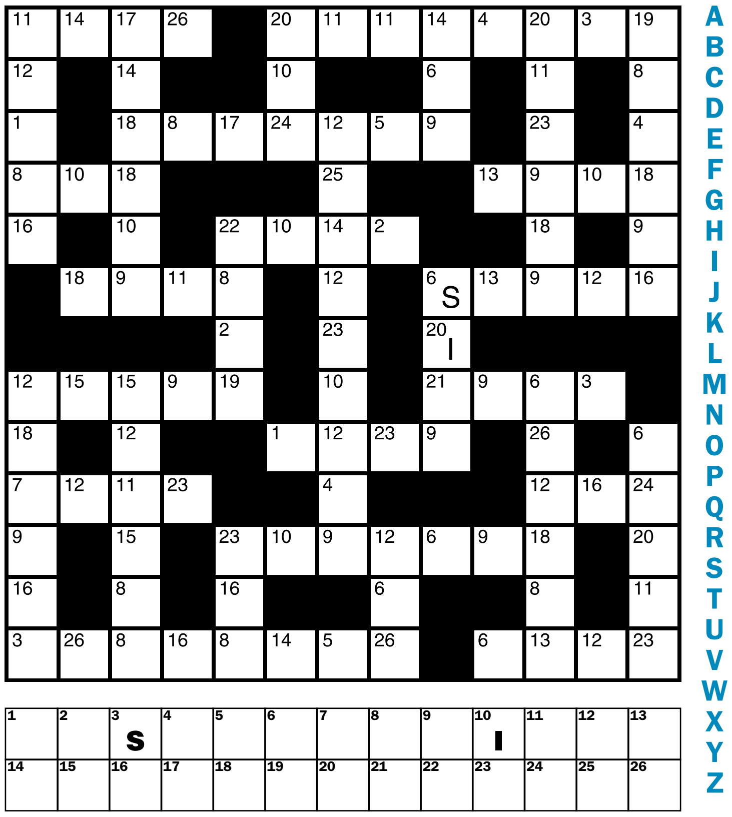
# CODEWORD

The number in each square corresponds to a letter. Work out the words in the grid using the letters provided. Fill in these known letters first, then use skill and judgement to work out the others.

**1**



**2**



# SAMURAI SUDOKU

Normal sudoku rules apply for all five 9x9 sudokus, but the 9x9 inner sudoku shares four of its 3x3 boxes with those of the outside sudokus.

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | | | | 8 | | | | 1 | | | | | | | | | 8 | | | 9 |
| | | | | 9 | 2 | 5 | | | | | | | 2 | | 6 | 7 | | | | |
| | | | | 5 | | 8 | | 4 | | | | 8 | 5 | | | | 9 | | | |
| | | | 5 | | 6 | | 1 | 8 | | | | | | 4 | | | | 6 | | 5 |
| 4 | 2 | 6 | | | | | | 5 | | | | 3 | | | | 5 | | | 7 | |
| | 5 | | 3 | | | | | | | | | 5 | 9 | 6 | | | | | 1 | |
| | 7 | 3 | | | | | | | 3 | 6 | 4 | | | | 5 | | 4 | | | |
| | | | 9 | | | | | | 5 | | | | | | 2 | | | 9 | 5 | |
| 9 | | 1 | 8 | 7 | | | | | 7 | 1 | | | | | 3 | 8 | | 2 | | |
| | | | | | | 5 | 7 | 1 | | | | | | 4 | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | 9 | | 8 | | | | 2 | | 3 | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | 2 | | | | | | 1 | 7 | 6 | | | | | | |
| | | 7 | | 5 | 6 | | | | | 8 | 5 | | | | | 3 | 1 | 4 | | 9 |
| | 9 | 5 | | | 8 | | | | | | 3 | | | | | | 9 | | | |
| | | | 1 | | 7 | | | | 6 | 4 | 7 | | | | | | | 7 | 5 | |
| | 4 | | | | | 6 | 3 | 2 | | | | | | | | | 8 | | 6 | |
| | 6 | | | 8 | | | | 1 | | | | 8 | | | | | | 3 | 2 | 4 |
| 5 | | 3 | | | | 9 | | | | | | 4 | 7 | | 2 | | 3 | | | |
| | | | 5 | | | | 8 | 9 | | | | 7 | | 4 | | 5 | | | | |
| | | | | 2 | 3 | | 4 | | | | | | | 2 | 4 | 8 | | | | |
| 4 | | | 8 | | | | | | | | | 9 | | | | 1 | | | | 8 |

# EASY SUDOKU 1

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 3 | 5 | | | | 7 | | 1 |
| | | | | 3 | 7 | | 4 | |
| 1 | | 7 | 5 | | | | 8 | 3 |
| | 9 | | | 1 | | 4 | 5 | |
| 7 | | | 4 | 6 | | | | 9 |
| | 1 | 4 | | 8 | 9 | | 3 | |
| 8 | 5 | | | | 3 | | | 4 |
| | | 1 | 6 | 4 | | | | |
| | 4 | | | | | 2 | 7 | 8 |

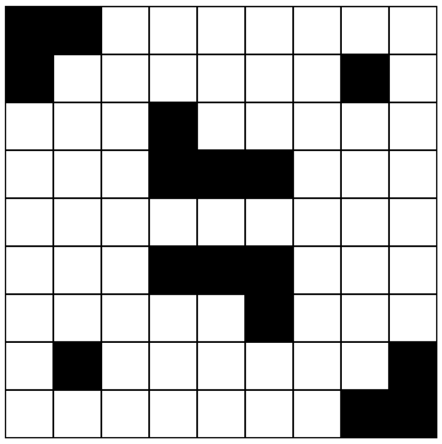
# HARD SUDOKU 1

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 8 | | | 1 | | | | 6 |
| 1 | | | | | 6 | 3 | | |
| | | | | 5 | | 7 | | |
| | | 9 | | 4 | 1 | 5 | | |
| 7 | | | | | | | | 9 |
| | | 5 | 2 | 9 | | 6 | | |
| | | 7 | | 6 | | | | |
| | 5 | 2 | 1 | | | | | 3 |
| 9 | | | | | | | 2 | |

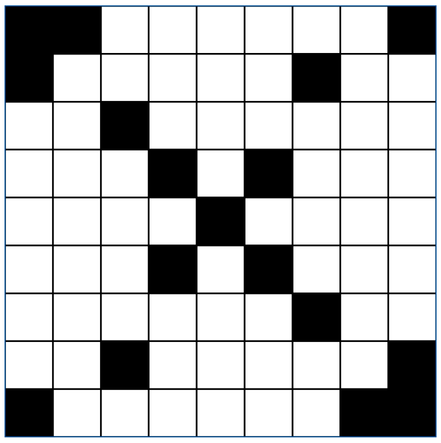
# NUMBERFIT 1

# NUMBERFIT 2

Use logic to fit the listed numbers below into the corresponding grid.



**2 digits:** 22 23
**3 digits:** 115 143 155 211 266 313 411 413 555 666
**5 digits:** 34156 56234
**6 digits:** 356262 632562 611214 313142
**7 digits:** 2212322 2245633 3345633 4412333
**9 digits:** 122113136 233121134 322113163



**2 digits:** 29 45 52 53 59 63
**3 digits:** 361 556 644 736 787 827 859 961
**4 digits:** 1663 2157 3776 4975 7152 9649
**5 digits:** 85644 99213
**6 digits:** 581665 587713 699713 756448 981663 987715
**8 digits:** 32467564 92564939

# ALPHADOKU 1

A 9 x 9 sudoku with the letters R to Z.

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | X | W | | T | | |
| | | Z | | | | | | |
| | W | U | | | T | Y | | |
| X | | W | | | | | | |
| | R | Y | | | | W | | |
| | S | | U | | | | | V |
| | | | | X | Z | | | |
| | V | X | | | | | | Y |
| | | | | R | | | V | |

# EASY SUDOKU 2

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 3 | 8 | | | | 4 | | |
| 6 | | | 5 | 4 | 8 | | | |
| 2 | | | 9 | | | 7 | | 6 |
| | 5 | 1 | | 3 | | | 7 | |
| | 8 | | 1 | | 5 | | 6 | |
| | 2 | | | 8 | | 5 | 3 | |
| 4 | | 7 | | | 1 | | | 3 |
| | | | 6 | 5 | 4 | | | 7 |
| | | 2 | | | | 6 | 4 | 8 |

# HARD SUDOKU 2

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | | | | | | | 6 |
| 2 | 9 | | | | | | 4 | |
| | | | 3 | 5 | 2 | | | |
| | | 2 | | 4 | | 8 | | |
| | | 3 | 6 | | 1 | 5 | | |
| | | 4 | | 9 | | 6 | | |
| | | | 4 | 2 | 7 | | | |
| | 2 | | | | | | 1 | 5 |
| 6 | | | | | | | 3 | |

# ALPHADOKU 2

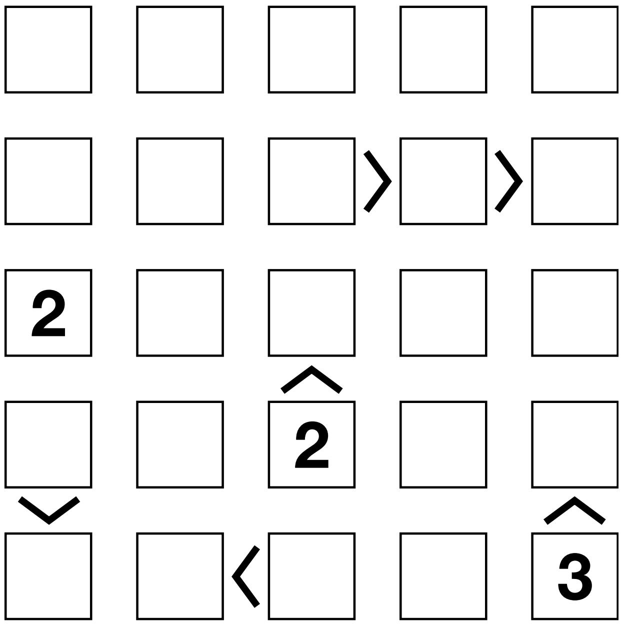
A 9 x 9 sudoku with the letters R to Z.

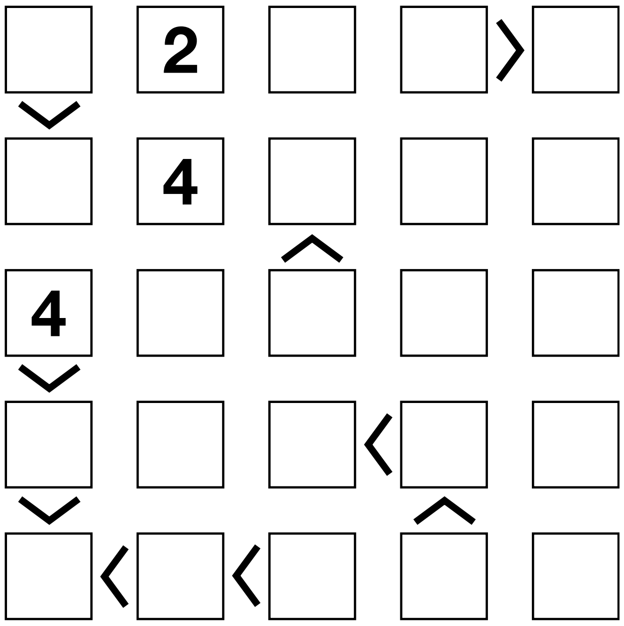
| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | W | S | | Y | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| R | | Z | | | | | V | |
| | | | X | | S | Z | | U |
| | Z | Y | | | W | R | | |
| | R | | | | | T | | |
| | | | Y | T | | W | U | |
| | V | | | | | | | |
| | T | | | Z | | | S | |

# FUTOSHIKI 1

# FUTOSHIKI 2

Insert the numbers one to five in each row and each column, making sure that no number is repeated. The only symbols to guide you are the "greater than" (>) and "less than" (<) signs.

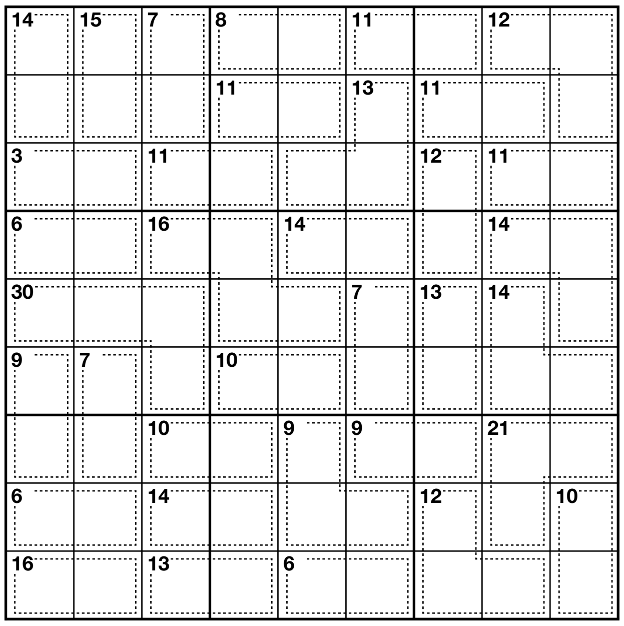




# KILLER SUDOKU 1

# KILLER SUDOKU 2

Each row and column hold the numbers 1 to 9 and the numbers in the cages must add to the given total. No number can be repeated in a cage.


14
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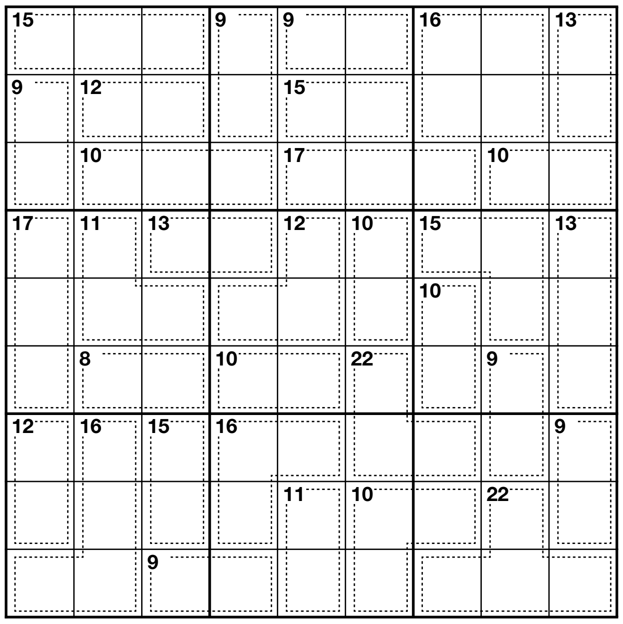
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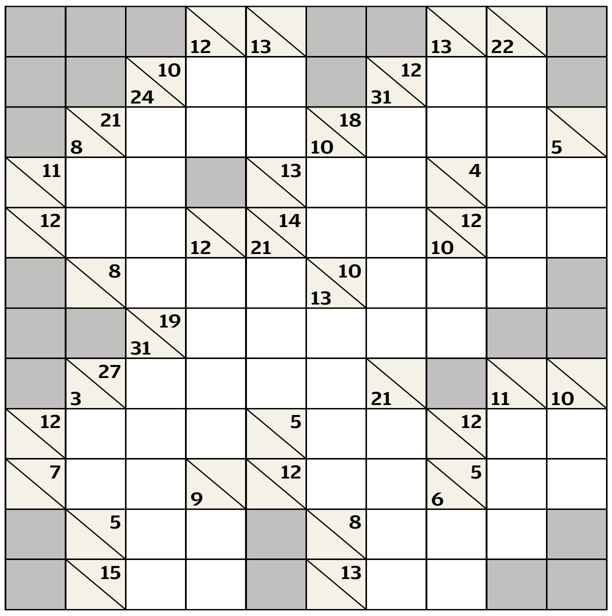
16
9
11
10
22
9

# KAKURO 1

# KAKURO 2

Fill in each series of blank squares using the numbers 1 to 9. Each series – across and down – must add up to the number in the shaded box at the beginning or top of the series. A number may be repeated in each line but not in a series.


12
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5
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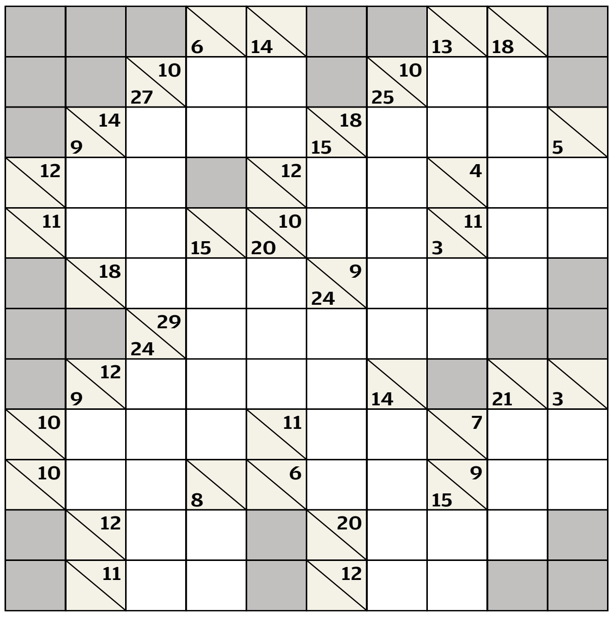
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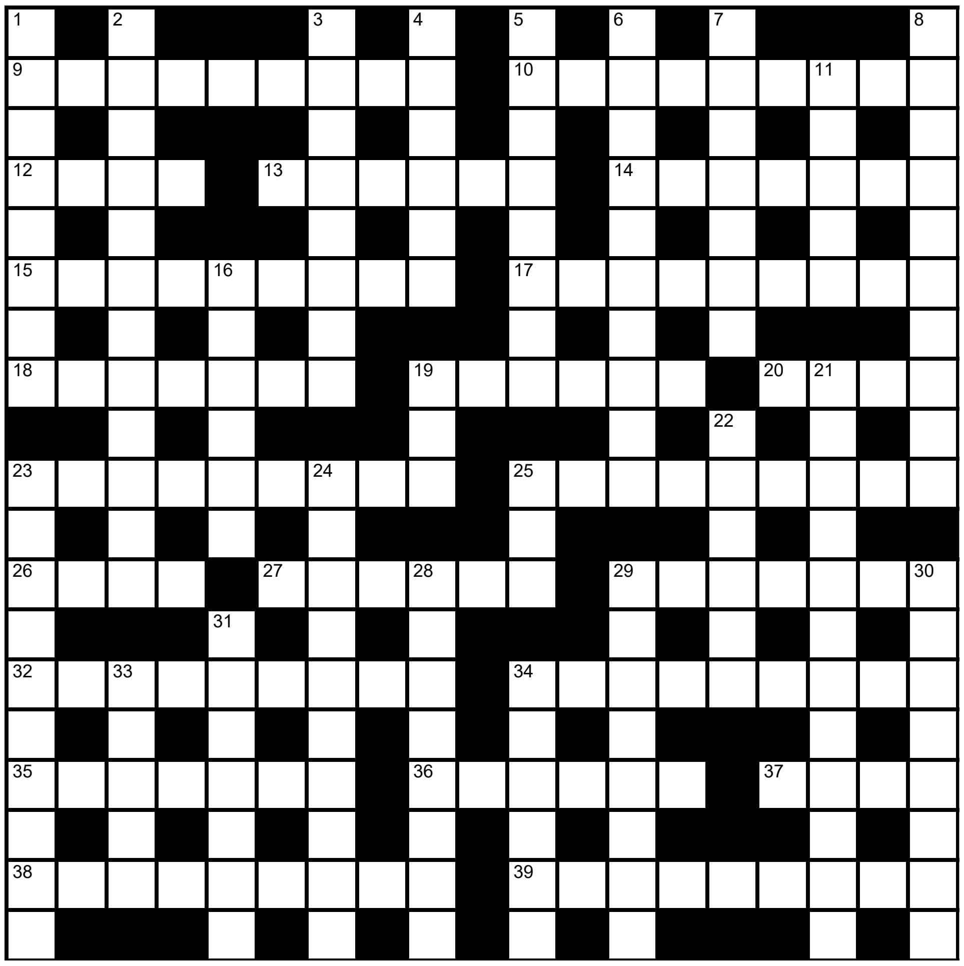
# BIG CROSSWORD 1



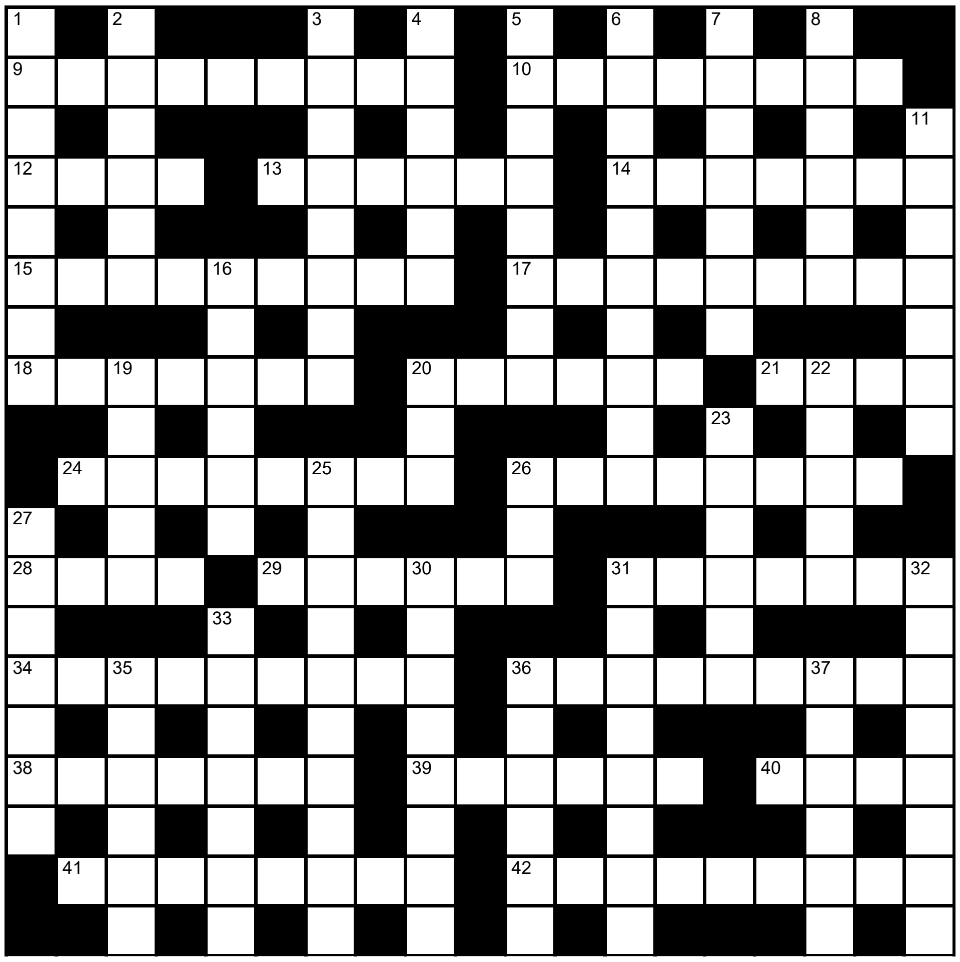
### ACROSS

9 Prone (9)
10 Make holes in (9)
12 Duty list (4)
13 Outdoor meal (6)
14 Drinking vessel (7)
15 Prehistoric creatures (9)
17 Notes (9)
18 Order (7)
19 Very small (6)
20 Legal document (4)
23 Radioactive element (9)
25 Fast vehicle (6,3)
26 Resonation (4)
27 Card game (6)
29 Rider's foot support (7)
32 Global (9)
34 Fruit (9)
35 Put in (7)
36 Cunning (6)
37 Information (4)
38 Vigorous (9)
39 Meddle (9)

### DOWN

1 Intermittent (8)
2 Farm animal disease (4-3-5)
3 Tired (8)
4 Sport (6)
5 Sample (8)
6 Branch of maths (10)
7 Nation (7)
8 Senior teacher (10)
11 Once more (5)
16 Skiing race (6)
19 Silent (3)
21 Gramophone (6,6)
22 Heart condition (6)
23 Bigoted (10)
24 Hesitant (10)
25 Regret (3)
28 Frailty (8)
29 Holiness (8)
30 Made ready (8)
31 Make mad (7)
33 Edition (5)
34 Unruffled (6)

# BIG CROSSWORD 2



### ACROSS

9 Artificial language (9)
10 Charming, lovable (8)
12 Greet (4)
13 Threefold (6)
14 Fast-running bird (7)
15 Approach of darkness (9)
17 Face-ache (9)
18 Chuckle gleefully (7)
20 Travelling bag (6)
21 Expensive (4)
24 Milk pudding (8)
26 Loafer (8)
28 Paradise (4)
29 Sleazy (6)
31 Arrears of work (7)
34 A bobby (9)
36 Stars (9)
38 Italian food (7)
39 Something illusory (6)
40 To select (4)
41 Borrowing charge (8)
42 Aim (9)

### DOWN

1 Grease monkey (8)
2 A season (6)
3 Grow or expand (8)
4 Unquestionable truth (6)
5 Fatherly (8)
6 Fairground stall (7,3)
7 Of Mars (7)
8 Airborne (6)
11 Playhouse (7)
16 Skin decoration (6)
19 Very fat (5)
20 By way of (3)
22 Identical (5)
23 Counting frame (6)
25 Instrument of torture (4,6)
26 Cover (3)
27 Panther (7)
30 Explosive (8)
31 Properly (2,6)
32 Small pickled cucumbers (8)
33 Month (7)
35 Possessing life (6)
36 Anchorite (6)
37 Primary source (6)

# TWO-SPEED CROSSWORD

This two-speed crossword has two sets of clues, but just one grid

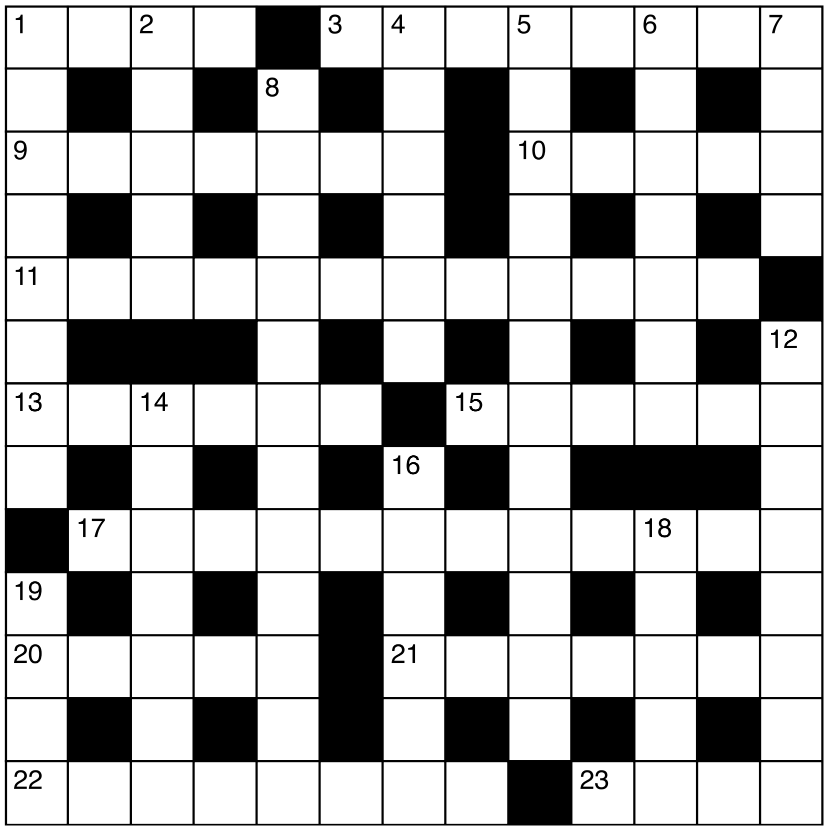
## CRYPTIC CLUES

### ACROSS

1. You need capital to go all over the place, we hear (4)
3. An alarming rush associated with stock (8)
9. A short dress, mother, to say the least! (7)
10. Plane in trouble in the Himalayas (5)
11. Outstanding occasion when the opened mail is delivered? (3-6,3)
13. What employees in the boxroom do? (6)
15. Fruit ring is given scope (6)
17. The scene of fighting is part of the engraving just inside the cover (12)
20. A place for storing hay high up (5)
21. Rouse no confusion – it's oppressive (7)
22. She produces an unusual stir in the army canteen! (8)
23. Provide sustenance, being paid for services (4)

### DOWN

1. Observed and checked by the teacher again (8)
2. Laid with explosives – be careful, one hears (5)
4. The automaton envelops juicy food (6)
5. Sounds like an insignificant gain for Malachi, maybe (5,7)
6. Account for what was once flat country (7)
7. They slip from the reel, squirming (4)
8. One not themselves! (12)
12. Marsh grass round the fields no longer enclosed (8)
14. Loads for the motor works! (7)
16. Somehow I stop about fifty navigation experts (6)
18. Parcel opened – bolt inside! (5)
19. Laboratory comes up with the start of mysterious ointment (4)



## QUICK CLUES

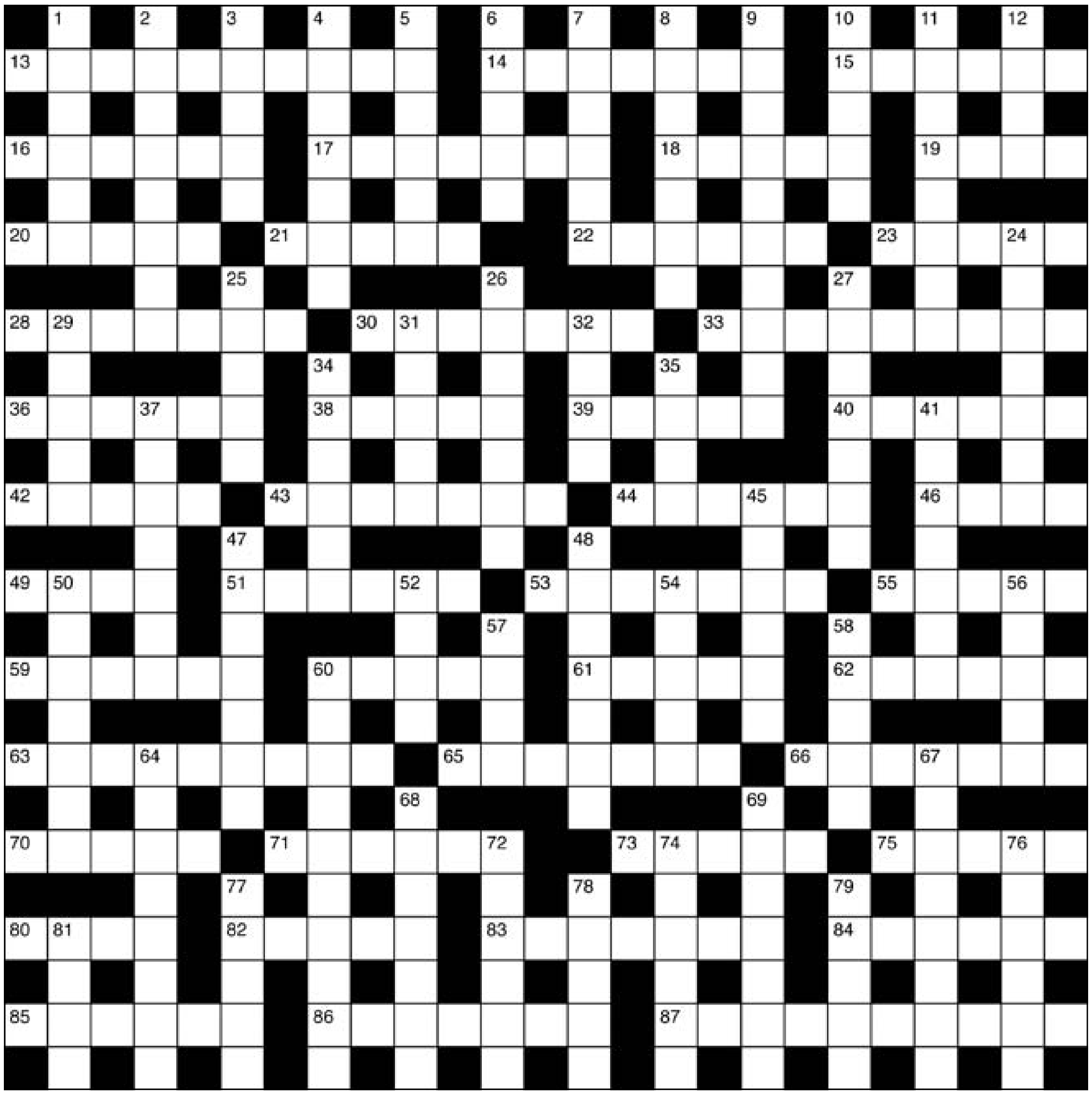
### ACROSS

1. Italian city (4)
3. Headlong rush (8)
9. Least (7)
10. Asian kingdom (5)
11. Important occasion (3-6,3)
13. Enclose (6)
15. Colour (6)
17. Book illustration (12)
20. Up above (5)
21. Burdensome (7)
22. Lover (8)
23. Nourish (4)

### DOWN

1. Commented (8)
2. Dug (5)
4. Salad vegetable (6)
5. Secondary oracle (5,7)
6. Justify (7)
7. Long fish (4)
8. Imitator (12)
12. Liberated (8)
14. Freights (7)
16. Aviators (6)
18. Run away to marry (5)
19. Aromatic substance (4)

# JUMBO CROSSWORD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### ACROSS

13. Wondered (10)
14. Bag (7)
15. Idea (6)
16. Thinking (6)
17. Paid (4,3)
18. Cook (5)
19. Indication (4)
20. Prise (5)
21. Accommodate (5)
22. Lifts (6)
23. Bird (5)
28. Bet (7)
30. Offer marriage (7)
33. Reprimanding (7,2)
36. Rake (6)
38. Animal (5)
39. Tad (5)
40. Responds (6)
42. Secure (5)
43. See (7)
44. Stature (6)
46. Extinct bird (4)
49. Twirl (4)
51. Go (6)
53. Occupation (7)
55. Yellowish-pink (5)
59. Fast (6)
60. Glinted (5)
61. Scoundrel (5)
62. Elapsed (6)
63. Fielder (5,4)
65. Taken off (7)
66. Accord (7)
70. Pal (5)
71. Waterway (6)
73. Pale (5)
75. Rage (5)
80. Dance (4)
82. Telephones (5)
83. Bears upon (7)
84. Deceive (4,2)
85. Shed (4-2)
86. Vest (7)
87. Examined (6,4)

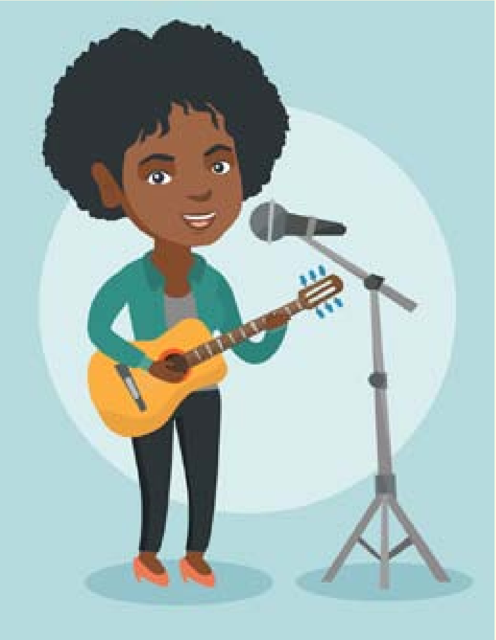
### DOWN

1. Dapper (6)
2. Mishap (8)
3. Stops (5)
4. Cheese (7)
5. Grants (6)
6. Fire (5)
7. Grasp (6)
8. Haggle (7)
9. Bald facts (5,5)
10. Prevaricate (5)
11. Alights (4,4)
12. Boast (4)
24. Yelled (7)
25. Fruit (5)
26. Inform (7)
27. Mood (7)
29. Smallest (5)
31. Italian (5)
32. Groups (4)
34. Fish (6)
35. Trick (4)
37. Teacher (7)
41. Speak to (7)
45. Spice (6)
47. Opposite (7)
48. Top prize (7)
50. Jug (7)
52. Become (4)
54. Quit (5)
56. Translucent (5)
57. In this place (4)
58. Cutlery item (5)
60. Dishonesty (10)
64. Go away (3,5)
67. Madman (8)
68. Stopping (7)
69. Board (7)
72. Spirits (6)
74. Colonise (6)
76. Forces (6)
77. Brush (5)
78. Fabric (5)
79. Alloy (5)
81. Help (4)

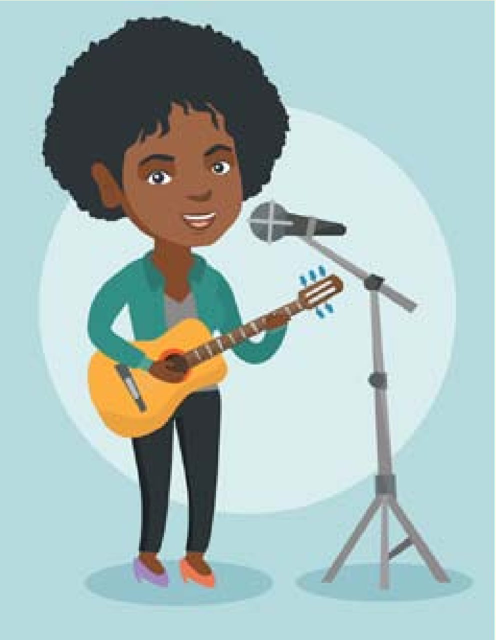
# SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

Can you spot the six differences between these two pictures?

**A**



**B**



# NUMBERCRUNCH

Follow the instructions from left to right, starting with the number given to reach an answer at the end of the row

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| BEGINNER<br>5 | ×6 | -19 | ×4 | +14 | Reverse the digits | ÷5 | -9 | ×4 | ANSWER |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| INTERMEDIATE<br>122 | -76 | ×7 | -54 | 75% of this | -24 | 2/3 of this | +164 | 5/6 of this | ANSWER |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ADVANCED<br>403 | 9/13 of this | +64 | Take the cube root | +273 | 9/10 of this | +276 | 6/11 of this | +129 | ANSWER |

# GIANT SUDOKU

Every row, every column and every 5 x 5 box must contain every digit from 1 to 9 and every letter from K to Z.

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | K | | P | Z | 4 | | | | 5 | | | | | | | | | | S | T | | | | |
| V | | 3 | | | | Y | M | | | R | | N | | | | 7 | | | | | | W | U | |
| Q | W | X | | | | 2 | | | R | | | | T | 9 | | | | 1 | N | | 6 | 8 | Y | 5 |
| | 5 | | U | | Z | | | | 9 | Q | S | | 1 | | 6 | | | | T | X | | O | N | |
| | L | | N | | 6 | T | | | | 2 | Y | | | | 3 | V | | U | | K | P | | 7 | |
| | | 2 | 3 | 9 | M | | | | | | | | | | S | | | | | | 8 | | Z | |
| | | | | V | | N | | | | | | | | P | T | Y | | | Z | | 3 | | 1 | |
| 4 | | 7 | 8 | | | Q | 9 | | Y | | | | W | | | L | X | N | | | | | | S |
| | | K | W | | | X | | | | 6 | L | | | 2 | | P | R | | 5 | | | N | V | |
| X | | | | S | 1 | | 7 | U | 3 | | N | T | | R | V | | K | | | | L | 2 | | Y |
| | 1 | | M | | P | | | | | | 6 | | | W | | N | | | L | | X | | | |
| P | | | | | | O | | | M | | T | | 8 | | | S | | W | | 3 | Y | | | L |
| | | | | | 7 | K | | | | | U | | | | 1 | O | | | X | | 2 | | 6 | R |
| | | N | | | 2 | | | | Q | | | S | 9 | | 8 | U | | Z | | W | T | | | 4 |
| | | U | 7 | T | 5 | | | | | P | 1 | X | N | | 2 | 6 | | | | | K | | | |
| | 3 | | | | L | | S | | | 5 | | | Z | | W | | V | | 8 | | | | 4 | |
| O | X | M | K | P | | | | W | N | | | | | 3 | | Z | Y | 5 | | | U | | | |
| | | | 2 | 5 | | | | | | K | | R | | | 9 | | P | | | Z | | 6 | | O |
| | | S | Y | | 9 | | | T | | X | P | O | | V | U | | | 3 | M | | | | 8 | 7 |
| Z | 7 | L | R | 4 | 8 | | | 6 | | U | | | | M | | | | | | S | | P | | |
| | | 5 | | | 3 | | R | | | 8 | | 6 | | | Y | | O | | | 2 | | K | | Z |
| | M | 1 | X | 2 | K | | | 4 | | L | | | | | | | | | 7 | Q | | | | |
| | | T | O | | Y | | 5 | 1 | P | | Q | | 7 | | | R | U | | K | | 4 | | | 9 |
| | 4 | | | | | | | | L | Z | | P | | | | Q | T | | 6 | | | U | O | |
| | Z | | | Y | O | | | | | | 2 | V | | 4 | | | 1 | | | | | 3 | M | |

# MEDIUM SUDOKU 1

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | | 6 | 4 | | 8 | | | |
| | 2 | | | | 9 | | 8 | |
| | 4 | 7 | | | | 2 | | 6 |
| 1 | 8 | | | 5 | | | | 7 |
| | 6 | | | | 4 | | 2 | |
| 4 | | | | 7 | | | 6 | 5 |
| | | 8 | | | | 3 | 4 | |
| | 5 | 3 | 2 | | | | | 8 |
| | | | | | 3 | 1 | | 9 |

# VERY HARD SUDOKU 1

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2 | | | 5 | | 3 | 7 | |
| 4 | | | | | 2 | | | 6 |
| | | | 6 | | | 1 | | |
| 3 | | 8 | | | 5 | | | 7 |
| | | | | | | | | |
| 6 | | | 4 | | | 8 | | 5 |
| | | 3 | | | 6 | | | |
| 8 | | | 1 | | | | | 3 |
| | 9 | 5 | | 3 | | | 2 | |

# CROSS OUT 1

# CROSS OUT 2

Cross out one of the two letters in each divided square to reveal a completed crossword grid.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| C/B | M/A | T/C | F/K | C/S |
| H/L | | R/H | | L/H |
| I/O | N/P | E/D | I/R | A/O |
| O/P | | S/A | | D/R |
| S/D | I/Y | E/M | L/X | E/Y |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| T/C | T/A | T/H | V/C | B/H |
| A/U | | E/A | | A/I |
| B/R | Y/O | N/Y | A/D | S/L |
| E/T | | G/S | | L/T |
| R/S | N/C | S/E | T/N | S/E |

# IMPOSSUDOKU 1

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | 1 | | | | | | | 2 |
| 2 | | | | | | | 8 | |
| | | 6 | | 7 | | 1 | | 9 |
| | 9 | 5 | 6 | | | | | |
| | | | 3 | | 7 | | | |
| | | | | | 5 | 4 | 9 | |
| 9 | | 2 | | 8 | | 6 | | |
| | 5 | | | | | | | 3 |
| 8 | | | | | | | 7 | 4 |

# MEDIUM SUDOKU 2

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | 4 | | | 6 | | | 8 | 2 |
| | | | 4 | | 9 | | | |
| | 5 | 8 | | | | 9 | | 6 |
| | 2 | | 8 | | 4 | | 6 | |
| | | | | | 6 | | | 1 |
| 9 | 1 | | 2 | | 7 | | 3 | |
| | | 7 | 6 | | | 3 | | |
| | | | 5 | | 3 | | | |
| 8 | 3 | | | 9 | | | 2 | 5 |

# VERY HARD SUDOKU 2

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | 5 | | 7 | 1 | |
| | | | | | | 5 | 3 | |
| | | 9 | | | | | | 8 |
| | | 8 | 3 | | 7 | | | 5 |
| | 1 | | 2 | | 6 | | 9 | |
| 4 | | | 5 | | 1 | 2 | | |
| 1 | | | | | | 3 | | |
| | 4 | 5 | | | | | | |
| | 8 | 7 | | 2 | | | | |

# IMPOSSUDOKU 2

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | | 3 | | 6 | | | | |
| | | | 3 | | | 8 | 7 | |
| 7 | | | | 8 | | | 1 | |
| | 7 | | 6 | | | | | |
| 2 | | 8 | | | | 1 | | 9 |
| | | | | | 9 | | 3 | |
| | 5 | | | 9 | | | | 2 |
| | 2 | 9 | | | 6 | | | |
| | | | | 5 | | 7 | | 8 |

# PATHFINDER 1

# PATHFINDER 2

From the top corner, make a path of words linked to the theme. The trail goes through each letter once but never diagonally.

**Halloween things**

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| S | H | A | C | K | T | R | D | E | V | W | E | I | R | E |
| A | M | I | I | O | R | E | N | O | I | L | R | P | M | A |
| L | A | N | R | T | T | A | E | T | O | M | E | L | F | V |
| L | H | E | V | E | P | U | L | S | N | T | W | O | T | L |
| L | A | S | C | A | J | M | E | T | E | S | G | R | E | O |
| L | O | W | K | O | N | P | K | S | R | I | E | C | H | P |
| E | T | N | A | L | I | K | P | L | E | B | I | T | I | W |
| R | N | R | R | C | E | O | P | A | B | M | E | G | H | L |
| A | M | O | O | N | A | U | I | E | O | O | Z | G | O | U |
| S | Y | H | R | F | E | S | J | S | B | B | I | N | Y | T |
| K | R | O | T | I | L | M | A | U | O | H | T | N | H | R |
| C | A | T | S | K | S | B | B | O | A | D | E | U | A | A |
| L | U | S | O | U | L | E | W | B | R | D | R | Y | E | P |
| D | N | H | H | G | L | O | N | O | E | C | E | C | M | U |
| R | O | E | A | D | S | T | E | C | M | E | T | O | S | T |

**European capitals**

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| B | S | L | A | D | U | B | E | L | S | I | V | S | E | S |
| R | I | A | V | P | O | L | S | S | K | Y | F | O | R | T |
| A | T | G | A | E | C | I | N | U | R | A | I | H | A | T |
| B | N | E | H | N | A | I | L | D | B | A | T | C | R | I |
| E | W | A | R | I | G | S | B | I | R | D | H | U | A | N |
| R | N | A | S | R | I | N | O | N | M | A | E | B | S | A |
| A | J | W | P | S | U | L | E | M | N | N | N | S | A | R |
| V | K | A | R | O | U | I | V | O | R | I | L | L | A | A |
| I | Y | G | U | B | R | G | N | A | L | S | K | I | T | J |
| K | E | R | E | M | E | M | O | C | E | I | N | O | V | E |
| S | T | M | V | I | X | U | L | O | H | T | S | A | T | E |
| C | O | L | N | E | A | R | O | B | U | P | E | M | S | R |
| K | H | O | N | A | P | I | L | S | D | A | E | L | L | D |
| I | S | I | N | L | R | S | E | O | G | L | T | T | A | A |
| A | O | C | N | I | E | B | D | A | R | E | B | A | V | M |

# WORDSEARCH 1

# WORDSEARCH 2

Find 12 words in the left and 11 words in the right grid.

**Olympic events**

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| P | U | R | J | A | V | E | L | I | N |
| O | T | Y | E | K | C | O | H | O | Y |
| L | U | L | N | M | K | K | H | F | R |
| E | P | P | O | X | M | I | A | S | E |
| V | T | B | M | N | G | A | U | K | H |
| A | O | H | O | H | G | P | H | I | C |
| U | H | L | J | X | X | J | X | J | R |
| L | S | U | C | S | I | D | U | U | A |
| T | M | N | K | E | Y | N | Q | M | B |
| P | S | K | A | T | I | N | G | P | P |

**Wheeled vehicles**

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| C | R | A | C | I | N | G | C | A | R |
| M | O | T | O | R | B | I | K | E | W |
| E | Z | A | E | T | Y | L | C | R | T |
| C | H | X | L | R | T | R | U | E | Y |
| H | G | I | C | A | H | P | R | T | U |
| E | L | C | Y | C | I | B | T | O | M |
| M | J | M | C | T | L | O | E | O | L |
| E | Z | R | I | O | W | A | P | C | W |
| H | Y | A | N | R | E | E | K | S | R |
| K | T | Q | U | A | D | B | I | K | E |

# ARROWWORD 1

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Humorous person | | Putting on clothes<br>Triumphed | | Curved line | | Fuss<br>Frozen water | |
| Possess | | | | Removed<br>Rita _, pop singer | | | |
| Northern African country<br>Singer | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | Fall slowly | | Hotpot |
| Brown fuzzy fruit | | Evil | | | | Large country (abbr.) | |
| | | | | Furrow | | | |
| Cosy | | Sound | | | | | |
| | | | | Animal's foot | | | |

# ARROWWORD 2

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Whitened<br>Slender | | Strike | | Construct | | Wooden support | |
| | | | | Bewilderment | | | |
| Formal contract | | Writing fluid<br>Weep | | | | French river | |
| | | | | Type of tree<br>Wild canine | | | |
| Shipmates<br>Reticent | | | | | Tarnish | | _ Hughes, poet |
| | | | Leave out | | | | |
| Uneven | | Distress signal | | | | | |
| | | | _ Perry, tennis player | | | | |

# SOLUTIONS

## PAGE ONE

### ENTERTAINMENT CROSSWORD

Across: 1 Miller; 4 Van Damme; 10 Roberta; 11 Spielberg; 12 Hattie; 16 Rooper; 18 Anita; 19 Donna; 22 Bea; 23 Gregg; 24 Emily; 25 Ono; 27 Susie; 29 Lance; 30 Ellery; 31 Paloma; 37 Ted Danson; 38 Kendall; 39 Dame Edna; 40 Ravens.

Down: 1 Mario Falcone; 2 Lobb; 3 Earl; 5 Alice; 6 Dale; 7 Mark; 8 Sara; 9 Ashton; 13 Don; 14 Ringo; 15 Jaden; 17 Ryan Reynolds; 19 Diggs; 20 Adele; 21 Cilla; 22 Byrne; 26 Fey; 28 Selena; 31 Posen; 32 Mika; 33 Jena; 34 Zane; 35 Anna; 36 Bale.

### CODEWORD

1

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| H | A | C | N | O | R | K | D | X | E | I | J | V |

| 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Z | B | P | L | S | Y | M | W | F | Q | T | G | U |

2

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| J | X | T | N | G | S | V | O | E | L | M | A | W |

| 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| U | B | R | C | D | Y | I | Z | F | P | K | Q | H |

## PAGES TWO AND THREE:

### SAMURAI SUDOKU

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 8 | 7 | 9 | 2 | 1 | | | | 6 | 4 | 7 | 1 | 3 | 8 | 5 | 2 | 9 |
| 7 | 8 | 4 | 1 | 9 | 2 | 5 | 6 | 3 | | | | 1 | 2 | 9 | 6 | 7 | 5 | 3 | 8 | 4 |
| 2 | 1 | 9 | 6 | 5 | 3 | 8 | 7 | 4 | | | | 8 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 9 | 7 | 6 | 1 |
| 3 | 9 | 7 | 5 | 4 | 6 | 2 | 1 | 8 | | | | 2 | 7 | 4 | 8 | 1 | 3 | 6 | 9 | 5 |
| 4 | 2 | 6 | 7 | 1 | 8 | 3 | 9 | 5 | | | | 3 | 1 | 8 | 9 | 5 | 6 | 4 | 7 | 2 |
| 1 | 5 | 8 | 3 | 2 | 9 | 7 | 4 | 6 | | | | 5 | 9 | 6 | 7 | 4 | 2 | 8 | 1 | 3 |
| 8 | 7 | 3 | 2 | 6 | 4 | 1 | 5 | 9 | 3 | 6 | 4 | 7 | 8 | 2 | 5 | 9 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 6 |
| 5 | 4 | 2 | 9 | 3 | 1 | 6 | 8 | 7 | 5 | 9 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 6 | 7 | 9 | 5 | 8 |
| 9 | 6 | 1 | 8 | 7 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 7 | 1 | 8 | 9 | 6 | 5 | 3 | 8 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 7 |
| | | | | | | 5 | 7 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 6 | 8 | 9 | 4 | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | 9 | 6 | 8 | 4 | 7 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 3 | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | 2 | 4 | 3 | 8 | 5 | 9 | 1 | 7 | 6 | | | | | | |
| 1 | 8 | 7 | 2 | 5 | 6 | 3 | 9 | 4 | 1 | 8 | 5 | 6 | 2 | 7 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 8 | 9 |
| 2 | 9 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 8 | 7 | 1 | 6 | 9 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 8 | 6 | 7 | 9 | 1 | 3 | 2 |
| 6 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 9 | 7 | 8 | 2 | 5 | 6 | 4 | 7 | 3 | 1 | 9 | 8 | 2 | 4 | 7 | 5 | 6 |
| 9 | 4 | 8 | 7 | 1 | 5 | 6 | 3 | 2 | | | | 2 | 9 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 8 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 7 | 6 | 2 | 3 | 8 | 9 | 4 | 5 | 1 | | | | 8 | 6 | 1 | 7 | 9 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 4 |
| 5 | 1 | 3 | 6 | 4 | 2 | 9 | 7 | 8 | | | | 4 | 7 | 5 | 2 | 6 | 3 | 8 | 9 | 1 |
| 3 | 7 | 1 | 5 | 6 | 4 | 2 | 8 | 9 | | | | 7 | 8 | 4 | 9 | 5 | 2 | 6 | 1 | 3 |
| 8 | 5 | 6 | 9 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 7 | | | | 1 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 8 | 6 | 9 | 7 | 5 |
| 4 | 2 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 1 | 5 | 6 | 3 | | | | 9 | 5 | 6 | 3 | 1 | 7 | 2 | 4 | 8 |

### EASY SUDOKU

1

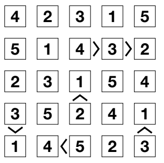
| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | 3 | 5 | 8 | 9 | 6 | 7 | 2 | 1 |
| 9 | 8 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 7 | 5 | 4 | 6 |
| 1 | 6 | 7 | 5 | 2 | 4 | 9 | 8 | 3 |
| 6 | 9 | 8 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 7 |
| 7 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 6 | 5 | 8 | 1 | 9 |
| 5 | 1 | 4 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 6 | 3 | 2 |
| 8 | 5 | 9 | 2 | 7 | 3 | 1 | 6 | 4 |
| 2 | 7 | 1 | 6 | 4 | 8 | 3 | 9 | 5 |
| 3 | 4 | 6 | 9 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 7 | 8 |

2

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 3 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 2 | 4 | 9 | 5 |
| 6 | 7 | 9 | 5 | 4 | 8 | 3 | 1 | 2 |
| 2 | 4 | 5 | 9 | 1 | 3 | 7 | 8 | 6 |
| 9 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 6 | 8 | 7 | 4 |
| 3 | 8 | 4 | 1 | 7 | 5 | 2 | 6 | 9 |
| 7 | 2 | 6 | 4 | 8 | 9 | 5 | 3 | 1 |
| 4 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 2 | 1 | 9 | 5 | 3 |
| 8 | 9 | 3 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 7 |
| 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 | 7 | 6 | 4 | 8 |

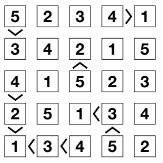
### FUTOSHIKI

1



| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 5 |
| 5 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 2 |
| 2 | 3 | 1 | 5 | 4 |
| 3 | 5 | 2 | 4 | 1 |
| 1 | 4 | 5 | 2 | 3 |

2



| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 |
| 3 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 5 |
| 4 | 1 | 5 | 2 | 3 |
| 2 | 5 | 1 | 3 | 4 |
| 1 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 2 |

### NUMBERFIT

1

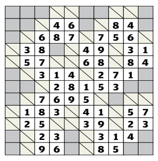
| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ■ | ■ | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 |
| ■ | 6 | 3 | 2 | 5 | 6 | 2 | ■ | 2 |
| 4 | 1 | 3 | ■ | 5 | 6 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 4 | 1 | 1 | ■ | ■ | ■ | 1 | 1 | 5 |
| 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 6 |
| 2 | 1 | 1 | ■ | ■ | ■ | 3 | 1 | 3 |
| 3 | 4 | 1 | 5 | 6 | ■ | 1 | 4 | 3 |
| 3 | ■ | 3 | 5 | 6 | 2 | 6 | 2 | ■ |
| 3 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 3 | 3 | ■ | ■ |

2

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ■ | ■ | 5 | 8 | 7 | 7 | 1 | 3 | ■ |
| ■ | 9 | 9 | 2 | 1 | 3 | ■ | 2 | 9 |
| 5 | 2 | ■ | 7 | 5 | 6 | 4 | 4 | 8 |
| 8 | 5 | 9 | ■ | 2 | ■ | 9 | 6 | 1 |
| 1 | 6 | 6 | 3 | ■ | 3 | 7 | 7 | 6 |
| 6 | 4 | 4 | ■ | 2 | ■ | 5 | 5 | 6 |
| 6 | 9 | 9 | 7 | 1 | 3 | ■ | 6 | 3 |
| 5 | 3 | ■ | 8 | 5 | 6 | 4 | 4 | ■ |
| ■ | 9 | 8 | 7 | 7 | 1 | 5 | ■ | ■ |

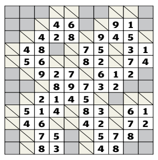
### KAKURO

1



| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | 4 | 6 | | | 8 | 4 | |
| | | 6 | 8 | 7 | | 7 | 5 | 6 | |
| | 3 | 8 | | | 4 | 9 | | 3 | 1 |
| | 5 | 7 | | | 6 | 8 | | 8 | 4 |
| | | 3 | 1 | 4 | | 2 | 7 | 1 | |
| | | | 2 | 8 | 1 | 5 | 3 | | |
| | | 7 | 6 | 9 | 5 | | | | |
| | 1 | 8 | 3 | | 4 | 1 | | 5 | 7 |
| | 2 | 5 | | | 3 | 9 | | 2 | 3 |
| | | 2 | 3 | | | 3 | 1 | 4 | |
| | | 9 | 6 | | | 8 | 5 | | |

2



| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | 4 | 6 | | | 9 | 1 | |
| | | 4 | 2 | 8 | | 9 | 4 | 5 | |
| | 4 | 8 | | | 7 | 5 | | 3 | 1 |
| | 5 | 6 | | | 8 | 2 | | 7 | 4 |
| | | 9 | 2 | 7 | | 6 | 1 | 2 | |
| | | | 8 | 9 | 7 | 3 | 2 | | |
| | | 2 | 1 | 4 | 5 | | | | |
| | 5 | 1 | 4 | | 8 | 3 | | 6 | 1 |
| | 4 | 6 | | | 4 | 2 | | 7 | 2 |
| | | 7 | 5 | | | 5 | 7 | 8 | |
| | | 8 | 3 | | | 4 | 8 | | |

### HARD SUDOKU

1

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | 8 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 7 | 2 | 9 | 6 |
| 1 | 7 | 4 | 9 | 2 | 6 | 3 | 5 | 8 |
| 2 | 9 | 6 | 3 | 5 | 8 | 7 | 1 | 4 |
| 6 | 3 | 9 | 7 | 4 | 1 | 5 | 8 | 2 |
| 7 | 2 | 1 | 6 | 8 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 9 |
| 8 | 4 | 5 | 2 | 9 | 3 | 6 | 7 | 1 |
| 3 | 1 | 7 | 8 | 6 | 2 | 9 | 4 | 5 |
| 4 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 7 | 9 | 8 | 6 | 3 |
| 9 | 6 | 8 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 7 |

2

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | 1 | 8 | 9 | 7 | 4 | 2 | 5 | 6 |
| 2 | 9 | 5 | 1 | 6 | 8 | 3 | 4 | 7 |
| 7 | 4 | 6 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 8 | 9 |
| 1 | 6 | 2 | 7 | 4 | 5 | 8 | 9 | 3 |
| 9 | 7 | 3 | 6 | 8 | 1 | 5 | 2 | 4 |
| 8 | 5 | 4 | 2 | 9 | 3 | 6 | 7 | 1 |
| 5 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 7 | 9 | 6 | 8 |
| 4 | 2 | 9 | 8 | 3 | 6 | 7 | 1 | 5 |
| 6 | 8 | 7 | 5 | 1 | 9 | 4 | 3 | 2 |

### KILLER SUDOKU

1

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9 | 7 | 4 | 2 | 6 | 8 | 3 | 5 | 1 |
| 5 | 8 | 3 | 4 | 7 | 1 | 9 | 2 | 6 |
| 2 | 1 | 6 | 5 | 3 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 4 |
| 1 | 5 | 2 | 7 | 8 | 6 | 4 | 3 | 9 |
| 8 | 6 | 9 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 1 | 2 |
| 3 | 4 | 7 | 1 | 9 | 2 | 6 | 8 | 5 |
| 6 | 3 | 1 | 9 | 5 | 7 | 2 | 4 | 8 |
| 4 | 2 | 8 | 6 | 1 | 3 | 5 | 9 | 7 |
| 7 | 9 | 5 | 8 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 6 | 3 |

2

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | 7 | 6 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 8 | 1 | 9 |
| 1 | 9 | 3 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 2 | 5 | 4 |
| 8 | 5 | 4 | 1 | 9 | 2 | 6 | 3 | 7 |
| 6 | 2 | 9 | 4 | 1 | 7 | 3 | 8 | 5 |
| 7 | 8 | 1 | 5 | 6 | 3 | 9 | 4 | 2 |
| 4 | 3 | 5 | 8 | 2 | 9 | 1 | 7 | 6 |
| 3 | 4 | 8 | 9 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 2 | 1 |
| 9 | 1 | 7 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 8 |
| 5 | 6 | 2 | 7 | 8 | 1 | 4 | 9 | 3 |

### ALPHADOKU

1

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| S | Y | V | X | W | U | T | Z | R |
| T | X | Z | Y | S | R | V | U | W |
| R | W | U | Z | V | T | Y | S | X |
| X | U | W | R | T | V | S | Y | Z |
| V | R | Y | S | Z | X | W | T | U |
| Z | S | T | U | Y | W | R | X | V |
| Y | T | R | V | X | Z | U | W | S |
| W | V | X | T | U | S | Z | R | Y |
| U | Z | S | W | R | Y | X | V | T |

2

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| T | U | W | S | V | Y | X | R | Z |
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## PAGES FOUR AND FIVE:

### BIG CROSSWORD 1

Across: 9 Prostrate, 10 Perforate, 12 Rota, 13 Picnic, 14 Tankard, 15 Dinosaurs, 17 Memoranda, 18 Command, 19 Minute, 20 Writ, 23 Plutonium, 25 Racing car, 26 Echo, 27 Bridge, 29 Stirrup, 32 Universal, 34 Pineapple, 35 Install, 36 Crafty, 37 Data, 38 Energetic, 39 Interfere.

Down: 1 Sporadic, 2 Foot-and-mouth, 3 Fatigued, 4 Tennis, 5 Specimen, 6 Arithmetic, 7 Country, 8 Headmaster, 11 Again, 16 Slalom, 19 Mum, 21 Record player, 22 Angina, 23 Prejudiced, 24 Irresolute, 25 Rue, 28 Delicacy, 29 Sanctity, 30 Prepared, 31 Derange, 33 Issue, 34 Placid.

### BIG CROSSWORD 2

Across: 9 Esperanto, 10 Adorable, 12 Hail, 13 Triple, 14 Ostrich, 15 Nightfall, 17 Neuralgia, 18 Chortle, 20 Valise, 21 Dear, 24 Semolina, 26 Layabout, 28 Eden, 29 Sordid, 31 Backlog, 34 Policeman, 36 Horoscope, 38 Ravioli, 39 Mirage, 40 Pick, 41 Interest, 42 Intention.

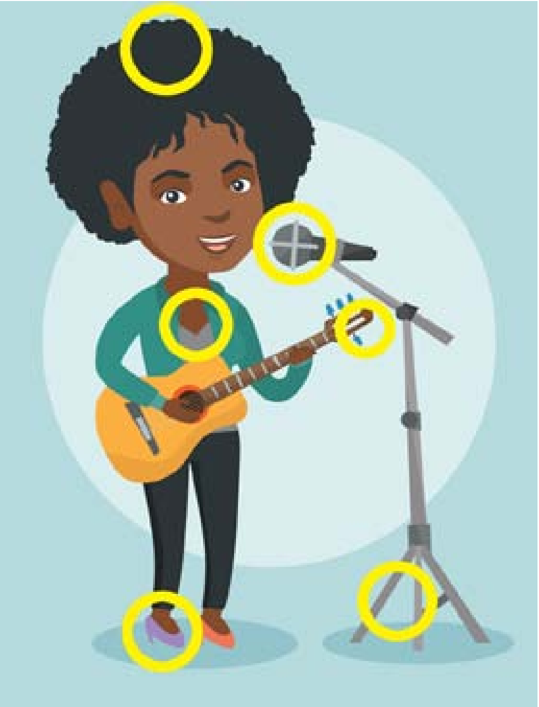
Down: 1 Mechanic, 2 Spring, 3 Increase, 4 Gospel, 5 Paternal, 6 Coconut shy, 7 Martian, 8 Flying, 11 Theatre, 16 Tattoo, 19 Obese, 20 Via, 22 Equal, 23 Abacus, 25 Iron maiden, 26 Lid, 27 Leopard, 30 Dynamite, 31 By rights, 32 Gherkins, 33 October, 35 Living, 36 Hermit, 37 Origin.

### JUMBO CROSSWORD

Across: 13 Speculated; 14 Holdall; 15 Theory; 16 Musing; 17 Laid out; 18 Grill; 19 Sign; 20 Lever; 21 House; 22 Hoists; 23 Goose; 28 Flutter; 30 Propose; 33 Jumping on; 36 Waster; 38 Lemur; 39 Touch; 40 Reacts; 42 Strap; 43 Witness; 44 Height; 46 Dodo; 49 Spin; 51 Energy; 53 Calling; 55 Peach; 59 Starve; 60 Shone; 61 Knave; 62 Passed; 63 Short slip; 65 Removed; 66 Concert; 70 Crony; 71 Stream; 73 Ashen; 75 Paddy; 80 Ball; 82 Rings; 83 Relates; 84 Take in; 85 Lean-to; 86 Singlet; 87 Looked over.

Down: 1 Spruce; 2 Accident; 3 Plugs; 4 Stilton; 5 Admits; 6 Shoot; 7 Clutch; 8 Bargain; 9 Plain truth; 10 Stall; 11 Gets down; 12 Brag; 24 Shouted; 25 Berry; 26 Apprise; 27 Spirits; 29 Least; 31 Roman; 32 Sets; 34 Plaice; 35 Ruse; 37 Trainer; 41 Address; 45 Ginger; 47 Reverse; 48 Jackpot; 50 Pitcher; 52 Grow; 54 Leave; 56 Clear; 57 Here; 58 Spoon; 60 Shiftiness; 64 Run along; 67 Crackpot; 68 Ceasing; 69 Pension; 72 Morale; 74 Settle; 76 Drives; 77 Broom; 78 Cloth; 79 Steel; 81 Abet.

### SPOT THE DIFFERENCE



### TWO-SPEED

Across: 1 Rome; 3 Stampede; 9 Minimum; 10 Nepal; 11 Red-letter day; 13 Encase; 15 Orange; 17 Frontispiece; 20 Aloft; 21 Onerous; 22 Mistress; 23 Feed.

Down: 1 Remarked; 2 Mined; 4 Tomato; 5 Minor prophet; 6 Explain; 7 Eels; 8 Impersonator; 12 Released; 14 Cargoes; 16 Pilots; 18 Elope; 19 Balm.

### NUMBERCRUNCH

Beginner 32
Intermediate 235
Advanced 417

## PAGES SIX AND SEVEN:

### PATHFINDER

1 Samhain, All Hallows' Eve, Trick or treat, Pumpkin, Jack-O'-lantern, Mask, Cauldron, Headstone, Cobweb, Skull, Ghost story, Horror film, Seance, Ouija board, Cemetery, Costume party, Haunted House, Apple bobbing, Zombie, Ghoul, Witch, Poltergeist, Monster, Skeleton, Devil, Werewolf, Vampire.

2 Bratislava, Dublin, Lisbon, Madrid, Brussels, Kyiv, Sofia, Athens, Bucharest, Tirana, Sarajevo, Amsterdam, Valletta, Belgrade, Oslo, Luxembourg, Monaco, Budapest, Helsinki, Tallinn, Rome, Vilnius, Riga, Copenhagen, Bern, Warsaw, Prague, Reykjavik, Stockholm, Vienna, Paris, Berlin, Nicosia.

### GIANT SUDOKU

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### VERY HARD SUDOKU

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### ARROWWORD

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### WORDSEARCH

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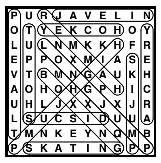

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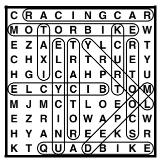

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# THERE'S NO LIMIT

## Buzzing Bees aim to go even higher

SEE PAGES 2-3

**GREAT LEAP FORWARD** Andrews' side are in the mix for Champions League qualification

BY **JOHN CROSS**

**BRENTFORD boss Keith Andrews insists there is "no ceiling" to what the club can achieve this season.**

In-form Brentford go to Chelsea in the lofty position of fifth in the table and are making an unlikely push for the Champions League places.

Andrews revealed he held talks with the whole squad this week about what they can achieve.

"There's no ceiling for what we can achieve as a group because that's a big part of the culture of the club," said Andrews.

CHELSEA
V
BRENTFORD
TODAY, KICK-OFF 3PM

**KARL'S MARK: ROBINSON SET FOR 800TH GAME AS A BOSS - PAGE 7**

## LEEDS v FULHAM

**Premier League: KO 3pm**

# HITMAN DOM WAS ALWAYS UP TO MARC

WHEN it came to performing in the Premier League, Marco Silva had no doubt that Dominic Calvert-Lewin would succeed.

And this afternoon he might just discover, once again, how much.

Calvert-Lewin, 28, is enjoying an impressive campaign for Leeds, having scored eight goals in his last nine appearances to help Daniel Farke's side push themselves clear of the relegation zone.

He is even in the conversation about making Thomas Tuchel's World Cup squad.

Calvert-Lewin (above) played under Silva at Everton and will come up against his old boss when Leeds host Fulham at Elland Road.

"It is not the first time he has performed at this level. When you talk about performing, he is a striker who can score in many different ways," said Cottagers boss Silva (below).

"When you look through his career, when he is playing, the numbers are there. Game by game, he is getting better and showing he is a proven Premier League striker."

Fulham head to Leeds looking to extend their own impressive six-match unbeaten run through all competitions.

Winger Harry Wilson has been in superb form – with six goals and four assists in his last 12 Premier League games – and now faces a club he almost joined on deadline day last summer.

Leeds secured their first arrival of the window on Thursday in Brighton's Facundo Buonanotte, who had his loan at Chelsea cut short amid a lack of consistent game time.

He was on the cusp of joining Leeds towards the end of the summer window before Chelsea came in late.

The club had to then pivot and ultimately honed in on Wilson.

The Wales star had agreed terms and signed documents to move to Leeds before Fulham pulled the plug in the dying embers of deadline day.

Buonanotte, 21, is eligible to play today and the Argentine might not be the sole arrival at Leeds, with manager Daniel Farke open to "two, perhaps three" new faces this month.

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## CHELSEA v BRENTFORD

**Premier League: KO 3pm**

# Real Cinderella story at Bees as cool-headed boss Andrews creates buzz against all odds

# GTECH SAVVY

BY **JOHN CROSS**

**KEITH ANDREWS admits he was too busy in the summer to take notice of the doom-mongers writing off Brentford.**

The Bees lost their manager Thomas Frank, captain Christian Norgaard and main goalscorers Bryan Mbeumo and Yoane Wissa, as well as their No.1 keeper Mark Flekken.

It looked a pretty tough task for Andrews to step up from set-piece coach to succeed Frank as Brentford boss – but they have been one of the best stories of this Premier League season.

Andrews, 45, is a hugely impressive character who has defied most pre-season predictions which had Brentford going down as one of the three relegated clubs.

They are sitting pretty in fifth place going into this weekend and looking upwards.

Brentford is a super smart club, they had a succession plan in place with the expectation Frank might quit (as he did for Tottenham) and keeping Andrews (above) in the building was key.

Andrews said: "I didn't have much time to read a lot in the summer, as you can imagine.

"I just cracked on with what I could control day to day and just focused on the priority on what was needed that day, that week. I was very positive and optimistic around the squad because I knew the characters really, really well.

"Did I anticipate we would be fifth in the league? No. I'd be lying if I said I did, because of the amount of upheaval.

"The hinges could have come off the door in the summer because of all the changes, but it's testament to the key people at the club that kept things ticking over really well.

"I would have said that there would be a big transition when Thomas left. But I was well aware of the values of the club, the humility, the way we worked and I really believe when you do that and work hard collectively, there's only one outcome."

That outcome has been pretty spectacular. They have beaten Aston Villa, Manchester United and Liverpool at home this season.

The recruitment has been excellent.

Jordan Henderson was such an astute signing, keeper Caoimhin Kelleher has been superb and 17-goal Igor Thiago has found his feet a year on from his £30m arrival, having missed much of his first season through injury.

Andrews (below with Yehor Yarmolyuk) gives a lot of credit to his "trusted lieutenants" in the dressing room who also know just how important the fanbase is because the Gtech Community Stadium has been such a

**HIGH G-FORCE** Keith Andrews has been a revelation at the Gtech Stadium

### PREMIER TABLE

| | P | W | D | L | F | A | Pts |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Arsenal | 21 | 15 | 4 | 2 | 40 | 14 | 49 |
| Man City | 21 | 13 | 4 | 4 | 45 | 19 | 43 |
| Aston Villa | 21 | 13 | 4 | 4 | 33 | 24 | 43 |
| Liverpool | 21 | 10 | 5 | 6 | 32 | 28 | 35 |
| Brentford | 21 | 10 | 3 | 8 | 35 | 28 | 33 |
| Newcastle | 21 | 9 | 5 | 7 | 32 | 27 | 32 |
| Man Utd | 21 | 8 | 8 | 5 | 36 | 32 | 32 |
| Chelsea | 21 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 34 | 24 | 31 |
| Fulham | 21 | 9 | 4 | 8 | 30 | 30 | 31 |
| Sunderland | 21 | 7 | 9 | 5 | 21 | 22 | 30 |
| Brighton | 21 | 7 | 8 | 6 | 31 | 28 | 29 |
| Everton | 21 | 8 | 5 | 8 | 23 | 25 | 29 |
| Crystal Palace | 21 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 22 | 23 | 28 |
| Tottenham | 21 | 7 | 6 | 8 | 30 | 27 | 27 |
| Bournemouth | 21 | 6 | 8 | 7 | 34 | 40 | 26 |
| Leeds | 21 | 5 | 7 | 9 | 29 | 37 | 22 |
| Nottm Forest | 21 | 6 | 3 | 12 | 21 | 34 | 21 |
| West Ham | 21 | 3 | 5 | 13 | 22 | 43 | 14 |
| Burnley | 21 | 3 | 4 | 14 | 22 | 41 | 13 |
| Wolves | 21 | 1 | 4 | 16 | 15 | 41 | 7 |

stronghold. "The results which have come in recent weeks don't come from the hard work in recent weeks, they come from the work in the past months and months," added Andrews.

"They are the values which underpin this season.

"The dressing room is really strong. It wasn't an easy summer and once the window shut I was up there with one of the happiest men in the world because then I knew what I was left to work with and who was in and who was not in.

"It's probably a combination of the trusted lieutenants that have been here for a number of years who I have loved working with and they are really important people to me. Players and staff.

"Then you have the impetus of new players to freshen things up, we lost a lot of talent in the summer. Clearly. We lost our captain. We had to replace certain aspects of that to be a competitive squad. We did that really well."

Former Republic of Ireland international Andrews had a much-travelled playing career and first got into coaching under Karl Robinson at MK Dons.

His path took him to Brentford as a set-piece coach, but he is also a very familiar face because he was a pundit for Sky and worked alongside new Chelsea boss Liam Rosenior.

Andrews added: "We worked together and did a few games together.

"I don't like traditional routes because I don't think there is a set way into management."

Whatever path Andrews has taken, it has served him very well.

# LIAM STYLES IT OUT

BY **BOBBY VINCENT**

LIAM ROSENIOR is confident his playing style will come good at Chelsea – despite frustration from supporters this week.

Fans voiced their anger during the Carabao Cup semi-final defeat against Arsenal when the Blues attempted to play out from the back and came unstuck against the Gunners' high press.

But Rosenior (left) is adamant this is how he wants his side to play and is confident over time it will be an effective weapon.

"I want the team to be comfortable," said Rosenior.

"Whether it's to play direct, whether it's to play through the pitch, to create an overload – either in the middle of the pitch or on the side – and to make the opposition run and press and tire them out."

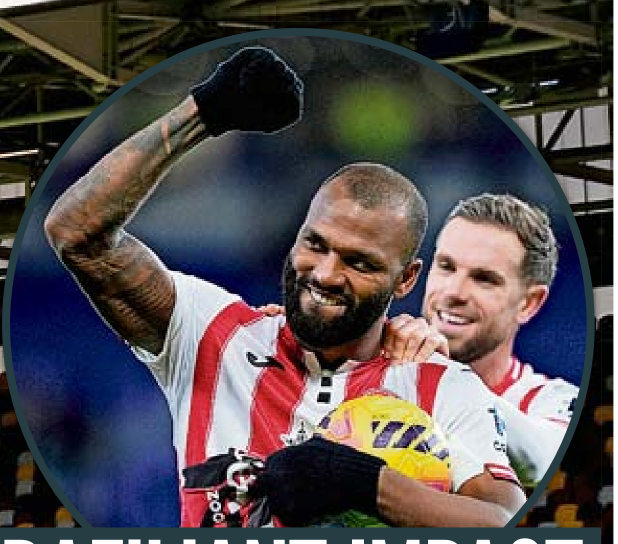
During Rosenior's days as Derby boss, the Rams were one of the first teams to popularise one of the centre-backs passing the ball to the goalkeeper from a goal-kick, which was something on show during Chelsea's loss to Arsenal.

"Everyone does it now," the Blues head coach added.

"When you play to the keeper, first the ball is in the middle of the pitch, so the opposition don't know where the ball can go.

"Then you can get timing off that pass in terms of your movements and your patterns."

Rosenior is hopeful Cole Palmer (thigh) and Reece James (hip) will return to the match-day squad for today's visit of Brentford, with the duo training over the last two days after missing recent matches against Charlton and Arsenal.



# IGOR'S MADE BRAZILIANT IMPACT

BY **RICHARD LEWIS**

HIS first goal of the Premier League season was a mere consolation, a 78th-minute penalty in a 3-1 defeat at Nottingham Forest on the opening weekend, where Brentford were 3-0 down at half-time.

But that setback was just the start for Igor Thiago (above with Jordan Henderson) and Brentford. The club sit fifth in the Premier League table and the striker second in the scoring charts with 16.

No Brazilian has ever scored more goals in a single Premier League campaign.

What an impact he has made in his second season at the Bees after injury hit his first campaign after signing from Club Brugge on a five-year deal.

Thiago socred twice in Brentford's 3-1 win over Burnley at the end of November, then didn't find the net in December.

But Chelsea will this afternoon face a player in sizzling form – with a hat-trick in the 4-2 win at Everton and another two in the 3-0 triumph over Sunderland.

**IGOR THIAGO – PREMIER LEAGUE**

| | Apps | Starts | Mins | Goals | Assists |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2024/2025 | 8 | 1 | 68 | 0 | 0 |
| 2025/2026 | 21 | 20 | 1,754 | 16 | 1 |
| OVERALL | 29 | 21 | 1,922 | 16 | 1 |

**TOP BRAZILIAN GOALSCORERS IN A SEASON IN THE PREM**

| | Season | Goals |
|---|---|---|
| Igor Thiago | 2025/2026 | 16 |
| Roberto Firmino | 2017/2018 | 15 |
| Gabriel Martinelli | 2022/2023 | 15 |
| Matheus Cunha | 2024/2025 | 15 |
| Robinho (right) | 2008/2009 | 14 |
| Gabriel Jesus | 2019/2020 | 14 |

# ODDS AND NODS

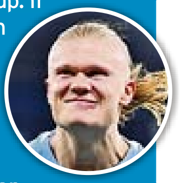
William HILL

BY **LEE PHELPS**
William Hill spokesperson

WHAT a start to the Premier League, with a lunchtime Manchester derby – Michael Carrick's first game in charge. He's the ninth man Pep Guardiola's shaken hands with ahead of this fixture.

There are four Final One Standing players feeling the pressure too, with a chance to win £200,000 with William Hill. Over £1m has already been won and there's a new £20k free-to-play jackpot going live on the app at 3pm today.

I'm intrigued to see how Carrick sets up. If he sticks with Darren Fletcher's approach expect goals.



I'm going for an away win with both teams scoring at just over 2/1. Oh, and the Epic Boost is Erling Haaland (above) to score at Evens. He has eight goals in six league Manchester derbies.

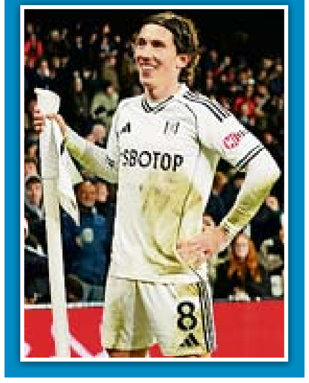
Remember you've got Acca Boost, with four selections needed to activate it. I'm not confident of putting Chelsea in – but I'd take both teams to score.

Liverpool should beat Burnley at home, Arsenal will no doubt win at Forest and I like Sunderland at home to Crystal Palace.

If you like a Bet Builder, Leeds v Fulham is worth a look, with Dominic Calvert-Lewin and Harry Wilson (below) scoring 16 between them and Ethan Ampadu and Sasa Lukic sharing 11 yellows this season.

Those four are 65/1 and you get Impact Sub on

ADVERTORIAL



# ABRAHAM LINK-IN

## Tammy reunion on the radar as Emery looks to sharpen attack

**TAM TARGET** Abraham is reportedly an option for Villa and Emery (above)

**ASTON VILLA v EVERTON**

**Premier League: 4.30pm tomorrow**

BY **JOHN TOWNLEY**

**UNAI EMERY confirmed that Aston Villa are looking to replace Donyell Malen with a new striker amid links with Tammy Abraham.**

Malen has joined Roma on loan with an obligation to buy, freeing up space for Villa to strengthen their attack.

Emery now wants to bring in a striker, with reports suggesting former England and Chelsea star Abraham – who spent a season on loan at Villa Park in 2018-19 – is the prime target.

Abraham is on loan from Roma to Besiktas, who have an obligation to buy the 28-year-old in the summer, unless Villa can strike a deal.

Emery said: "I arrived here three-and-a-half years ago and we had [Ollie] Watkins and [Danny] Ings. Ings left because he had offers and good deals with other clubs. In that moment, it was the same situation as now.

"He was performing well, he was a striker competing with Watkins, and he decided to leave.

"We signed Jhon Duran, and in two years he was progressing, adapting, performing, and competing with Watkins and getting numbers for the team.

"Last year we decided, because it is the same situation, that he would leave. We signed on loan [Marcus] Rashford and Malen as wingers or strikers, and now, after one year performing and helping us, Malen has left.

"We need the same situation we had the last three years: one player competing with Watkins.

"The priority is someone as a central striker, with the characteristics as a striker, and to compete with Watkins or maybe even play with him. Now, Malen has left and another player can help us with numbers in the squad."

Everton make the trip to Villa Park tomorrow with manager David Moyes dismissing claims that they have rejected a bid for Iliman Ndiaye – insisting the club's owners are prepared to back him in the transfer market.

Ndiaye (right)is still at the Africa Cup of Nations, representing Senegal in tomorrow's final against hosts Morocco.

Reports suggested the Toffees had turned down a bid from Inter Milan for their forward in the summer but Moyes said: "There's absolutely zero truth in that. As far as I'm concerned, I've never even heard of it to be honest. It sounds like someone has made that up somewhere.

"We've no intention of letting Ili go, none whatsoever. I'm sure there's a price for every player on the planet if you look around but if you ask me, we have no intention of selling Ili – we need him back."

Moyes also maintained that decisions still ultimately rest with him over which players Everton sign and he is confident he has the support of the club's American owners, The Friedkin Group.

"I've got the final say if we want to buy a player or we don't want to buy a player," the Scot added. "But I get told by my superiors how much we've got to spend and what we've got available and I have to work off those thoughts.

"We're in there trying, but it doesn't mean we're just going to take any player for the sake of it.

"All managers, we're all hoping to get bigger numbers, butthe club have outlined we spent in the summer, that was the main part.

"We don't expect to be doing too much business. If I can get a couple of players in, the club will certainly back me, I've got no doubt about that, they've been really good.

"Maybe they can't back me on a £60million or £70m signing but they'll back me on what they'd think would be the right numbers if we can come up with the players required."

**THE JOB'S DON** Malen (left) has moved on after spell as back-up to Watkins (right)

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# POINT TO PROVE FOR EDWARDS

ROB EDWARDS believes his Wolves side are itching to "right some of the wrongs" as they look to continue their mini-revival against Newcastle.

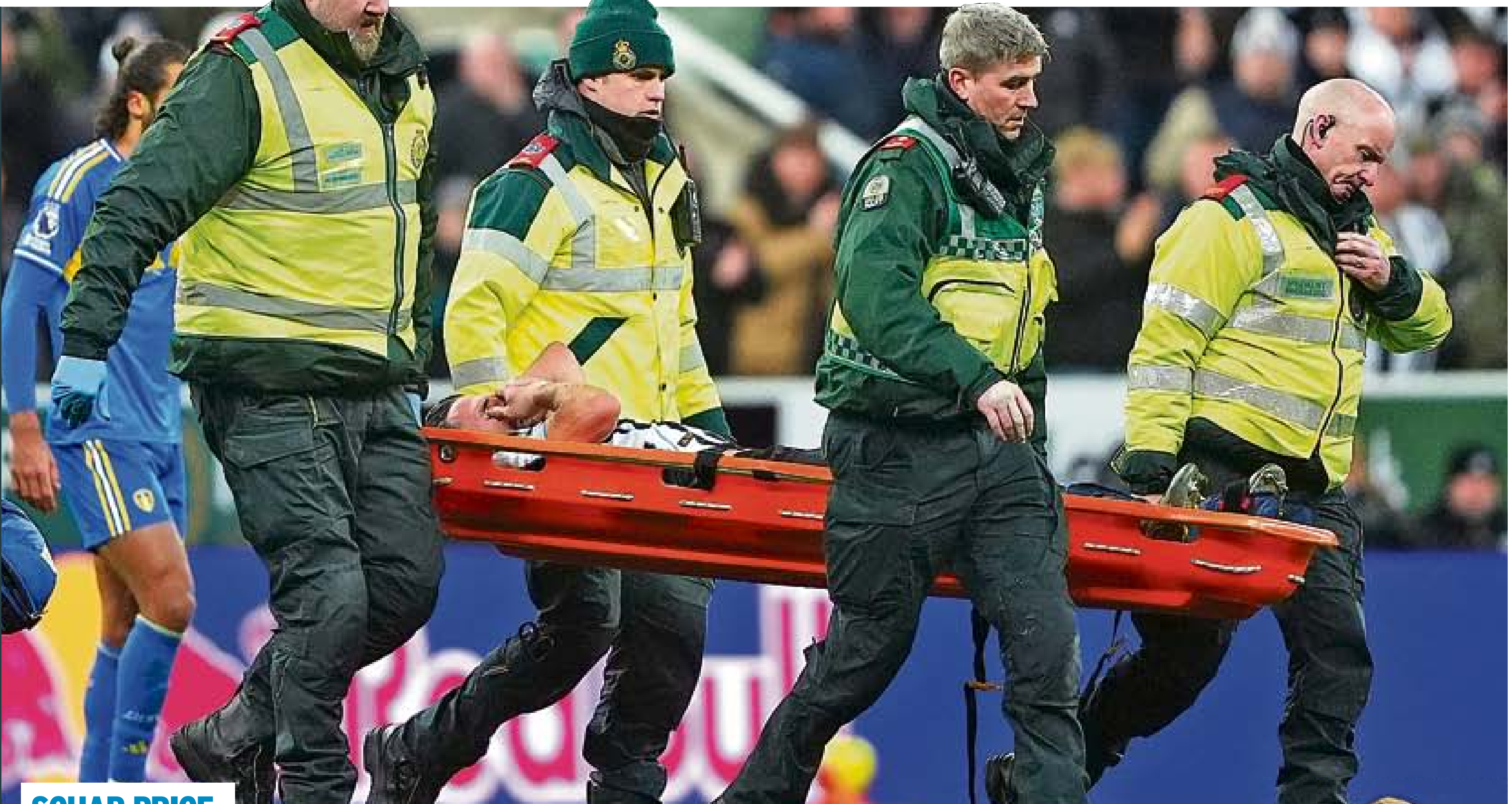
Bottom with just two points on Christmas Day, Wolves were on course to break several unwanted records but they are now unbeaten in four matches in all competitions.

They are still 14 points adrift of safety but Edwards (above) insisted there is nobody looking to cut and run during the January transfer window after draws at Manchester United and Everton and a win against West Ham.

The head coach said: "There's no one knocking on my door saying, 'I want to go'. The group are fighting.

"A lot of the lads around here want to try and right some of the wrongs"

Ivory Coast defender Emmanuel Agbadou is available after returning from the Africa Cup of Nations, but forward Tawanda Chirewa is out because of illness.



**SCHAR PRICE**
Toon's need for a new signing was increased with Schar's injury

# EDDIE'S AT THE READIES

## Howe says Toon willing to splash the cash

**WOLVES v NEWCASTLE**
**Premier League: KO 2pm tomorrow**

BY **LEE RYDER**

**EDDIE HOWE insists he is in a position to spend this January after being asked about the £125million fortune Newcastle picked up by selling Alexander Isak last summer.**

The Toon remain in a defensive crisis, with Howe's squad being pushed to the limit by their challenge on four fronts.

A defender is on the wish-list, with Fabian Schar and Tino Livramento now facing long spells on the sidelines, but head coach Howe says a review on transfers is likely, with one eye on Profit and Sustainability Rules [PSR].

He said: "Collectively we will come to the right decisions.

"I don't think it is a case that there is a pot of money stood there somewhere. PSR is constantly moving and changing depending on our income. Lots of things affect our income. So whether we are in the Champions League, how successful we are through the season, it is constantly changing.

"All I can assure everybody is that there is money to spend, the club are willing to spend it, it is not a case of holding anything back. Of course we have to comply within the rules."

When asked if Schar's ankle injury, which required surgery this week and will keep him sidelined for three months, means a definite incoming defensive target, Howe (above) said: "All options are available to us.

"I've said so many times, there's a lot to consider, summer activity, January activity, value for money, the right players being available.

"It is very fluid at the moment. We are still in that watching or holding pattern and we will see what happens."

Going into tomorrow's clash at Wolves, Howe admits that his squad are feeling the strain of the season after a gruelling FA Cup tie against Bournemouth, which went to extra-time and penalties, was followed by a semi-final first leg against Manchester City in the Carabao Cup. Howe said: "There was a bit of fatigue in the Manchester City performance.

"Now it's a case, between that game and the Wolves game, to really try and freshen the players up and try to get to our absolute best.

"This is a massive game in our Premier League season. We've built some momentum and we want to continue that as long as we can."

The trip to Molineux could be an opportunity for Anthony Elanga, who has yet to capture the form he showed at Nottingham Forest before his £55m move to Tyneside.

He returned from a knee injury as a subsitute against City, but struggled. Howe, though, expects him to come good, using Joelinton and Anthony Gordon as examples of players who have recovered from tough starts at Newcastle.

He said: "It's my message to every player, to love and enjoy the players we have and try to help them find their best form.

"We've seen players who have taken time to find their best rhythm, Anthony Gordon, Joelinton.

"Let's bring love to all our players."

Trustpilot
★★★★★
Rated Excellent

## COVENTRY v LEICESTER

**Championship: KO 12.30pm**

# LAMPARD'S LOCHED IN ON TARGET

FRANK LAMPARD insists faltering Coventry aren't ready to collapse like Devon Loch.

The Championship leaders enjoy a healthy six-point advantage at the summit ahead of the clash with Leicester.

But the Sky Blues are without a win in four games to give the chasing pack hope of reeling them in - just like the horse that fell in the Grand National with victory in sight 70 years ago.

Coventry welcome back seven-goal midfielder Victor Torp after injury. Boss Lampard (above) said: "Our focus is on the remaining 20 league games because there are a lot of points to play for and a long way to go.

"We've had a challenging period over Christmas with the games, and we didn't get exactly what we wanted out of them, but it still leaves us in a fantastic position.

"We must remain positive and we're determined to try to give the fans what they want this season.

"We know it will be tough against Leicester because they are a parachute team and they're strong. We've had a full week to prepare, and from this point it's down to the whole squad to achieve the aim that we started the season with."

Defender Jannik Vestergaard and midfielder Boubakary Soumare will be available for the Foxes. Manager Marti Cifuentes said: "They are ready."

## IPSWICH v BLACKBURN

**Championship: KO 12.30pm**

# PRIZE GUY MAC FACES HIGH JINX

KIERAN MCKENNA is keeping his fingers crossed the Manager of the Month curse does not derail Ipswich's promotion push.

The Tractor Boys boss scooped the award for December thanks to four wins from seven, which included a league double over leaders Coventry.

Third-place Town have two games in hand on Middlesbrough, who are second, and after his sixth monthly manager's gong the Irishman (top) said: "December was a really challenging month.

"It asked so much of us, with lots of games and travelling, so the award is credit to everyone involved.

"Not every game went our way, but we really stuck at it and showed lots of quality and resilience."

Ipswich host Blackburn aiming for a fourth straight win and a sixth unbeaten in all competitions. McKenna added: "We know it will take a big effort over the next few months. It's now about everyone continuing to work hard, sticking together and seeing where we get to."

Blackburn are four points off the drop zone after one win in the last 11 games as they go in search of a first victory at Portman Road in more than 31 years.

Boss Valerien Ismael hopes to have Mathias Jorgensen available after the former Denmark Under-21 forward joined from Norwegian side Bodo/Glimt on a three-and-a-half-year deal.

# NEST FOOT FORWARD

## Hornets winger buzzing for revenge

**A HAPPY RETURN**
Boss Gracia is getting the best out of winger Irankunda in his second spell in charge at Vicarage Road

## WATFORD v MILLWALL

**Championship: KO 12.30pm**

BY **JASON MELLOR**

**NESTORY IRANKUNDA is plotting a Millwall revenge mission to keep his Watford roller-coaster on the up.**

The Hornets' popular Aussie international winger admits he has already had plenty of highs and lows in his first six months at Vicarage Road.

But the teenage summer signing from Bayern Munich insists he is loving his first taste of English football as he pulls out all the stops to help Watford's bid for a Premier League return.

It is sixth versus fifth as Javi Gracia's men host Alex Neil's side in the club's annual Graham Taylor matchday to remember the former Watford, Aston Villa and England boss.

The Hornets are looking to make it five straight wins and avenge the narrow 1-0 defeat at the New Den in September. The upturn in Watford's form has coincided with Spaniard Gracia's return for a second stint in charge three months ago.

Tanzania-born Irankunda said: "I've had my ups and downs in the last few months, but I'm feeling confident again and I'm enjoying my football.

"The boss has come in and he's helped me regain that confidence. Playing in England is always something I've wanted to do and it's exciting times"

Irankunda has come off the bench to provide assists in his last two league appearances to support Watford's seven-game unbeaten Championship run. The 19-year-old added: "I'm looking forward to facing Millwall because I feel that I have something to prove.

"We want to beat them because we lost to them in the first game. We're in a really good position right now, and we want to push on to get more wins to keep the momentum going. We're hungry to keep the victories coming.

"We know it's going to be tough because they play good football.

"We work hard for each other, and with the fans behind us, it gives you a real boost to perform to your best."

Manager Neil is expecting another competitive encounter against their promotion rivals as the Lions look to make it five unbeaten in the league.

Both teams are coming off five-goal FA Cup thumpings. The Scot said: "There has been a bit of inconsistency about Watford over the last season or two, but there has never been a question about them having a very good playing squad. With Javi going in, they've found a rhythm and a way of maximising what they've got."

## PRESTON v DERBY

**Championship: KO 3pm**

# HECK: GIVE US A PASS IF VISITORS PARK BUS

BY **JASON MELLOR**

PAUL HECKINGBOTTOM has warned Preston fans to get used to visiting teams parking the bus at Deepdale.

North End have lost just once in 10 in the league to sit fourth ahead of today's visit by mid-table Derby.

That kind of consistency has led to a growing number of teams being happy to come away from Lancashire with a point, with little ambition to make a game of it.

Heckingbottom likes the back-handed compliment, but insists fans must not pile pressure on his players when things get frustrating.

The Preston boss (left) said: "Teams are going to come with game plans to try and give themselves the best chance of winning.

"One of those is to frustrate us and take away the pace of how we want to play. It's something you've got to get used to because we're a team at the higher end of the league. That's been the approach of a lot of teams at our place.

"If we have to be really patient between now and the end of the season, then that's what we're going to have to be. That's everyone - players, fans, me on the side because no one's going to make it easy for us. Derby will be another tough one as they're happy to grind games out.

"They are not afraid to sit in and win matches without the ball, so we're going to have to be patient."

The Rams have won just one of the last six and are out for revenge after losing by the only goal to North End at Pride Park in September.

Boss John Eustace insisted: "The lads are in a good place at the moment."

**BOSSING IT** Salford's Robinson is still going strong in managerial hot-seat

# BIG GAMES MANAGER

## 800-up as Robbo joins elite class

**SWINDON TOWN v SALFORD CITY**

**League Two: KO 3pm**

BY **JOHN CROSS**

**KARL ROBINSON is set to reach a remarkable milestone against Swindon this afternoon.**

Salford boss Robinson, 45, will take charge of his 800th game in management at The County Ground.

And for a manager who has achieved things quickly, there is a certain irony to the fact that he had to wait a week to reach the landmark because Salford's FA Cup tie with Swindon was postponed a week ago.

Salford will play Swindon this weekend in League Two and then play Ian Holloway's side again three days later in their re-arranged third round match.

It puts Robinson in an elite group of managers, with the likes of Sir Alex Ferguson taking charge of 2,155 in his career while Neil Warnock oversaw a total of 1,960.

Robinson has some distance to go to reach those numbers, but it is his age which sets him apart as one of the EFL's most reliable, enduring and consistent managers. He is into the final six months of his contract, but is doing just as good a job as ever.

He had six years at MK Dons, two at Charlton and then five at his previous club Oxford.

Salford sit fourth in the table, they have a game in hand on leaders Bromley and, let us be honest, it cannot be easy being manager of a club where Gary Neville and David Beckham are among the joint owners.

Robinson was a non-League striker, coached at Liverpool's academy and then got his first manager's job at MK Dons aged 30.

During that journey from MK Dons (left) to Charlton, Oxford and now Salford, he has always championed and developed younger players. Former England star Dele Alli was a standout player at MK Dons before he moved on to enjoy a great career with Tottenham and played at a World Cup.

He can also count the likes of Brentford's Keith Andrews, Portsmouth boss John Mousinho and Johnnie Jackson as among those to have either played or worked under him who have later gone to become managers.

Robinson told BBC Manchester: "800 games and people think you are old, when I'm still one of the younger managers in the game!

"It is only about the next game. Me and Ian Holloway have worked out that we have about 1,800 games between us, so we've been in the game a long time.

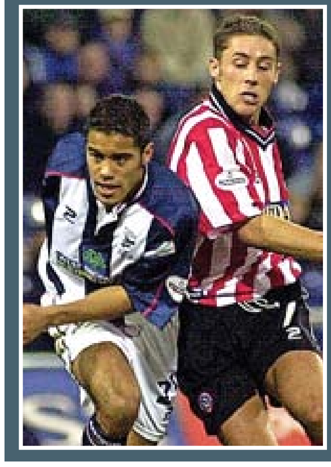
"But it's only ever been about the next game, so you can't worry too much about the future."

**MANAGEMENT STATS**

| | P | W | D | L | F | A | W% |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| MK Dons | 346 | 147 | 81 | 118 | 539 | 437 | 42.5% |
| Charlton Athletic | 74 | 27 | 21 | 26 | 95 | 98 | 36.5% |
| Oxford United | 274 | 110 | 70 | 94 | 415 | 349 | 40.1% |
| Salford City | 105 | 45 | 28 | 32 | 157 | 149 | 42.9% |
| Total | 799 | 329 | 200 | 270 | 1,206 | 1,033 | 41.2% |

**CHARLTON v SHEFFIELD UNITED**

**Championship: KO 3pm**



# BLADES STILL AT CUTTING EDGE

**EXCLUSIVE** BY **TOM BLOW**

SHEFFIELD UNITED legend Michael Brown believes the Blades can still make the play-offs – but it won't be easy.

Chris Wilder's resurgent side travel to Charlton today, hoping to continue their rise up the table.

The Blades have won seven of their last 10 league games to move within nine points of the Championship play-offs.

Brown, who played 174 times for United, believes there's enough time for them to force their way into the promotion picture.

"Yes, they can make the play-offs," Brown (in his playing days, left) said. "Will it be tough? Yeah."

United's momentum was brought to a halt with a 2-0 defeat at West Brom and a 5-3 loss at Wrexham. But they've recovered with back-to-back league wins to get their campaign on track again.

Brown added: "West Brom was a big disappointment. Chris reacted... reminding everyone that, 'We've gone a long way, but this league is relentless.'

"Then, obviously, a disappointing result at Wrexham.

"Home form has been good. A couple of players in the window, and I'm sure they'll be on the right track. No one will want Sheffield United if they come on strong."

* Michael Brown was speaking on behalf of club sponsors Midnite.

## LEAGUE ONE ROUND-UP

# TAYLOR MOVE 'SUITS US ALL'

HUDDERSFIELD have defended the decision to allow £3million striker Joe Taylor to join League One rivals WIGAN on loan for the rest of the season.

Ahead of the trip to BURTON, boss Lee Grant (above) said: "Joe has an opportunity to join a side where he's likely to play more regularly and that's in the best interests of all."

Taylor, who is Town's second top scorer with seven goals, is set to figure in the derby visit by BOLTON. Harry Gray – younger brother of Spurs midfielder Archie – is in line to make his ROTHERHAM debut after the 17-year-old striker's loan move from Leeds. The Millers look to avoid an eighth straight defeat at promotion-chasing STOCKPORT.

Tom Cleverley admits he needs to cool-it as he faces a third touchline ban. The PLYMOUTH boss was sent to the stands for the second time this season in the midweek Vertu Trophy victory over Bristol Rovers.

Ahead of the trip to PETERBOROUGH, he said: "I have to hold my hands up and say, it's not good enough. I demand discipline from the players and I've not shown it too many times myself. I need to rein it in a bit."

READING midfielder Ben Elliott misses the trip to LEYTON ORIENT after being ruled out for the rest of the season with a persistent thigh problem.

EXETER, beaten 10-1 in the FA Cup by Manchester City, aim to bounce back against STEVENAGE.

**LEAGUE ONE**

| | P | W | D | L | F | A | Pts |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cardiff | 25 | 16 | 4 | 5 | 43 | 25 | 52 |
| Lincoln City | 25 | 14 | 6 | 5 | 40 | 26 | 48 |
| Bradford | 24 | 13 | 7 | 4 | 34 | 25 | 46 |
| Stockport | 25 | 12 | 6 | 7 | 34 | 30 | 42 |
| Huddersfield | 26 | 11 | 6 | 9 | 45 | 35 | 39 |
| Bolton | 25 | 10 | 9 | 6 | 32 | 25 | 39 |
| Luton | 25 | 11 | 5 | 9 | 35 | 30 | 38 |
| Stevenage | 23 | 10 | 7 | 6 | 27 | 20 | 37 |
| Reading | 24 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 32 | 28 | 35 |
| Peterboro | 25 | 11 | 2 | 12 | 33 | 34 | 35 |
| Wycombe | 25 | 8 | 9 | 8 | 32 | 28 | 33 |
| Mansfield | 23 | 9 | 5 | 9 | 31 | 28 | 32 |
| AFC W'don | 24 | 9 | 4 | 11 | 27 | 33 | 31 |
| Exeter | 24 | 9 | 3 | 12 | 25 | 23 | 30 |
| Wigan | 24 | 7 | 9 | 8 | 26 | 27 | 30 |
| Plymouth | 25 | 9 | 3 | 13 | 32 | 39 | 30 |
| Barnsley | 21 | 8 | 5 | 8 | 33 | 33 | 29 |
| L Orient | 25 | 8 | 5 | 12 | 36 | 42 | 29 |
| Blackpool | 25 | 8 | 5 | 12 | 31 | 37 | 29 |
| Northamptn | 24 | 8 | 5 | 11 | 22 | 28 | 29 |
| Burton A | 24 | 7 | 6 | 11 | 23 | 34 | 27 |
| Rotherham | 24 | 6 | 6 | 12 | 22 | 35 | 24 |
| Doncaster | 24 | 6 | 5 | 13 | 24 | 41 | 23 |
| Port Vale | 23 | 4 | 6 | 13 | 18 | 31 | 18 |

## LEAGUE TWO ROUND-UP

# NO BUY-BYES FROM WARNE

PAUL WARNE insists there are plenty more miles left in MK Dons' January 'shopping trolley'.

The promotion-chasing Dons have already made three new signings.

They travel to ACCRINGTON today with boss Warne (above) declaring: "We're not where we want to be, so we haven't parked the shopping trolley yet."

WALSALL have signed defender Kacper Lopata, who has left Barnsley on loan for a FOURTH time in two years. The Poland-born centre-back is in line to be involved at TRANMERE as the promotion-chasers look to win for the first time in three league games.

Joe Anderson, 24, is set to make his BARROW debut at CREWE after joining on an 18-month deal from Sunderland. The defender said: "A big thing of why we went up last season was the spirit off the pitch. Hopefully I can bring that here."

HARROGATE hope new loan signing Chanse Headman can help them snap a 15-game winless streak as they travel to relegation rivals SHREWSBURY. Town will climb out of the bottom two with a first league victory since September and 20-year-old Brentford defender Headman said: "I'm not the type to back down from a challenge."

BRISTOL ROVERS host COLCHESTER, with boss Steve Evans saying: "We need to win enough games to make sure we go forward in the EFL."

**LEAGUE TWO**

| | P | W | D | L | F | A | Pts |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bromley | 25 | 15 | 6 | 4 | 44 | 27 | 51 |
| Swindon | 24 | 14 | 4 | 6 | 39 | 26 | 46 |
| Walsall | 24 | 13 | 4 | 7 | 32 | 23 | 43 |
| Salford City | 24 | 13 | 4 | 7 | 35 | 31 | 43 |
| MK Dons | 25 | 11 | 8 | 6 | 46 | 28 | 41 |
| Cambridge U | 24 | 11 | 8 | 5 | 28 | 19 | 41 |
| Chesterfield | 25 | 10 | 10 | 5 | 42 | 35 | 40 |
| Notts Cnty | 24 | 11 | 6 | 7 | 36 | 26 | 39 |
| Colchester | 24 | 9 | 9 | 6 | 38 | 28 | 36 |
| Crewe | 25 | 10 | 6 | 9 | 39 | 33 | 36 |
| Barnet | 24 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 32 | 26 | 35 |
| Grimsby | 24 | 9 | 7 | 8 | 35 | 30 | 34 |
| Fleetwood | 24 | 9 | 7 | 8 | 32 | 30 | 34 |
| Accrington | 24 | 9 | 6 | 9 | 27 | 26 | 33 |
| Oldham | 24 | 7 | 11 | 6 | 24 | 19 | 32 |
| Gillingham | 24 | 7 | 11 | 6 | 31 | 28 | 32 |
| Tranmere | 25 | 8 | 8 | 9 | 39 | 39 | 32 |
| Cheltenham | 25 | 9 | 3 | 13 | 25 | 41 | 30 |
| Barrow | 24 | 6 | 6 | 12 | 26 | 35 | 24 |
| Bristol Rvrs | 24 | 6 | 3 | 15 | 21 | 44 | 21 |
| Crawley Tn | 25 | 4 | 7 | 14 | 28 | 45 | 19 |
| Shrewsbury | 24 | 4 | 7 | 13 | 21 | 41 | 19 |
| Harrogate T | 25 | 4 | 6 | 15 | 19 | 40 | 18 |
| Newport | 24 | 4 | 5 | 15 | 24 | 43 | 17 |

# YOUR WEEKEND GUIDE TO THE PREM

## MAN UNITED v MAN CITY

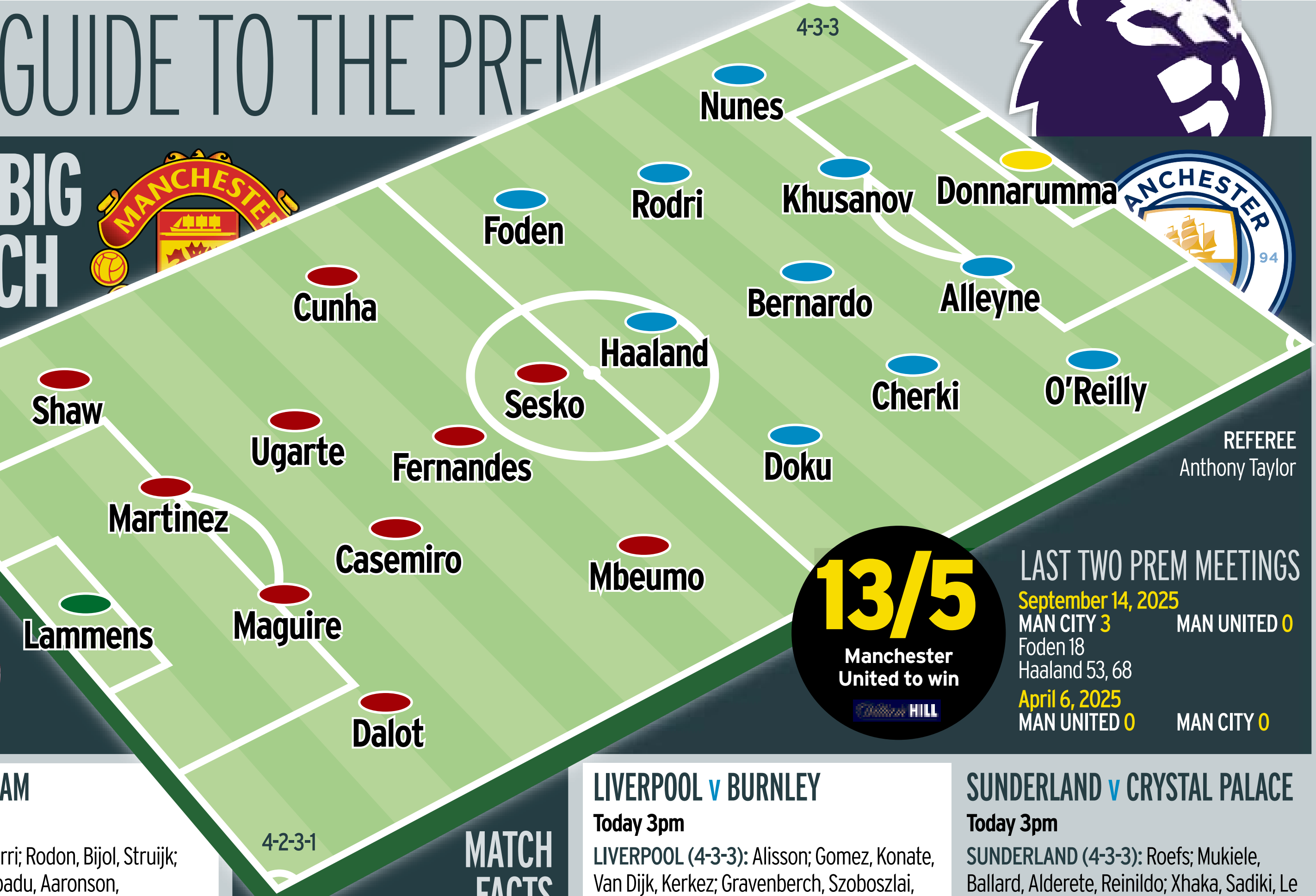
**Today 12.30pm, Sky Sports**

MANCHESTER United will play their fewest matches in a campaign in 111 years this season – and this lunchtime they will want to avoid another landmark which goes back many years.

United were beaten 3-0 (below) at the Etihad in September and they last failed to score in both league meetings with City in 1973-74, a campaign that saw them relegated from the top-flight.

City have won more Premier League away games – nine – against United than any other visiting side while only Liverpool (41) have scored more goals at Old Trafford than the City (37).

## THE BIG MATCH



REFEREE
Anthony Taylor

**13/5**
Manchester United to win
William Hill

### LAST TWO PREM MEETINGS

September 14, 2025
MAN CITY 3 MAN UNITED 0
Foden 18
Haaland 53, 68

April 6, 2025
MAN UNITED 0 MAN CITY 0

## CHELSEA v BRENTFORD

**Today 3pm**

**CHELSEA (4-2-3-1):** Sanchez; Acheampong, Chalobah, Fofana, Cucurella; Caicedo, Santos; Neto, Fernandez, Garnacho; Joao Pedro.

**BRENTFORD (4-2-3-1):** Kelleher; Kayode, Ajer, Collins, Henry; Yarmolyuk, Janelt; Ouattara, Jensen, Schade; Thiago.

**REFEREE:** John Brooks

**1** Chelsea have won just one of their last eight Premier League games against Brentford (D4 L3).

**Chelsea to win: 4/6** William Hill

## TOTTENHAM v WEST HAM

**Today 3pm**

**TOTTENHAM (4-2-3-1):** Vicario; Porro, Romero, Van de Ven, Spence; Gallagher, Palhinha; Odobert, Xavi, Tel; Kolo Muani.

**WEST HAM (4-3-3):** Areola; Wan-Bissaka, Todibo, Kilman, Walker-Peters; Potts, Fernandes, Magassa; Bowen, Summerville, Castellanos.

**REFEREE:** Jarred Gillett

**1** West Ham have won just one of their last eight league games against Spurs (D3 L4).

**West Ham to win: 18/5** William Hill

## LEEDS v FULHAM

**Today 3pm**

**LEEDS (3-5-2):** Perri; Rodon, Bijol, Struijk; Justin, Stach, Ampadu, Aaronson, Gudmundsson; Calvert-Lewin, Okafor.

**FULHAM (4-2-3-1):** Leno; Castagne, Andersen, Diop, Robinson; Berge, Cairney; Wilson, Smith-Rowe, Kevin; Jimenez.

**REFEREE:** Chris Kavanagh

**3** Fulham have won each of their last three league games against Leeds

**Leeds to win: 6/5** William Hill

## NOTTINGHAM FOREST v ARSENAL

**Tonight 5.30pm, TNT Sports**

**FOREST (4-2-3-1):** Sels; Williams, Milenkovic, Murillo, Aina; Sangare, Anderson; Dominguez, Gibbs-White, Hudson-Odoi; Jesus.

**ARSENAL (4-3-3):** Raya; Timber, Saliba, Gabriel, Lewis-Skelly; Zubimendi, Rice, Odegaard; Saka, Gyokeres, Trossard.

**REFEREE:** Michael Oliver

**8** Nottingham Forest have lost eight of their last 10 Premier League games against Arsenal.

**Draw: 3/1** William Hill

## MATCH FACTS

**9** Man City have won more Premier League away games against Man United than any other visiting side.

**4** Man United have failed to score in four of their last five Premier League home games against Man City.

**4** Erling Haaland has been involved in more Premier League goals against Man Utd than any other Man City player (11 – 8 goals, 3 assists), having a hand in all three goals on his last appearance at Old Trafford in October 2023 (2 goals, 1 assist in a 3-0 win).

## LIVERPOOL v BURNLEY

**Today 3pm**

**LIVERPOOL (4-3-3):** Alisson; Gomez, Konate, Van Dijk, Kerkez; Gravenberch, Szoboszlai, Jones; Frimpong, Ekitike, Wirtz.

**BURNLEY (5-4-1):** Dubravka; Walker, Laurent, Esteve, Humphries, Pires; Anthony, Luis, Ugochukwu, Hannibal; Broja.

**REFEREE:** Andy Madley

**1** Liverpool have lost just one of their nine Premier League home games against Burnley (W6 D2).

**Draw: 5/1** William Hill

## WOLVES v NEWCASTLE

**Tomorrow 2pm, Sky Sports**

**WOLVES (3-5-2):** Sa; Mosquera, Santiago Bueno, Krejci; Tchatchoua, Joao Gomes, Arias, Mane, Hugo Bueno; Hwang, Strand-Larsen.

**NEWCASTLE (4-3-3):** Pope; Miley, Thiaw, Botman, Hall; Joelinton, Tonali, Guimaraes; Gordon, Elanga, Wissa.

**REFEREE:** Sam Barrott

**2** Wolves have won just two of their 21 Premier League games against Newcastle.

**Wolves to win: 17/5** William Hill

## SUNDERLAND v CRYSTAL PALACE

**Today 3pm**

**SUNDERLAND (4-3-3):** Roefs; Mukiele, Ballard, Alderete, Reinildo; Xhaka, Sadiki, Le Fee; Adingra, Brobbey, Mundle.

**CRYSTAL PALACE (3-4-2-1):** Henderson; Richards, Lacroix, Canvot; Devenny, Wharton, Hughes, Mitchell; Johnson, Pino; Mateta.

**REFEREE:** Rob Jones

**0** Sunderland are winless in their last five home league games against Crystal Palace (D3 L2).

**Crystal Palace to win: 9/5** William Hill

## ASTON VILLA v EVERTON

**Tomorrow 4.30pm, Sky Sports**

**ASTON VILLA (4-2-3-1):** Bizot; Cash, Konsa, Torres, Maatsen; Tielemans, Bogarde; Buendía, McGinn, Rogers; Watkins.

**EVERTON (4-2-3-1):** Pickford; Mykolenko, O'Brien, Tarkowski, Patterson; Garner, Armstrong; Grealish, McNeil, Dibling; Barry.

**REFEREE:** Tony Harrington

**13** Aston Villa are unbeaten in all 13 of their Premier League games against Everton.

**Everton to win: 19/5** William Hill